

LIGUORIAN

DECEMBER, 1960 • 25¢

HOW TO USE THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

TRAFFIC SIGNS YOU DON'T SEE

ROCKS AND ROSES FOR MY HUSBAND!



THE Liguorian

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Unchangeable Principles
of Truth, Justice,
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and to All That
Brings Happiness to
Human Beings*
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THE LIGUORIAN

LIGUORI, MO.

Don't drift through the Christmas season. Don't be distracted from its essential purpose. Don't waste it. Here is a program that will prevent such tragedies.

HOW TO USE

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

DONALD F. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

THE HEART and the essence of the Christmas season, that is, the four weeks of Advent, the feast of Christmas itself, and the succeeding days up to the feast of the Epiphany, is the fact that it offers a glorious opportunity for every Christian to grow in the love of Jesus Christ.

That statement may seem obvious, trite, oversimplifying, and too neatly generalizing; yet it is one of the most profound truths that can be taken hold of by the mind of man. A wasted Christmas season is one in which a man grows no closer to Christ than he was before it began. A fruitful Christmas season is one in

which a human being in some degree strengthens the bond of love between himself and Jesus Christ.

This is the end for which all human beings were made — to love Jesus Christ as the true God become visible and lovable in the world. This is the purpose for which the Son of God came into the world — to captivate the hearts of the creatures whom He had made to His own image and likeness. This is the essential object of the solemnities and spiritual festivities that have traditionally marked the Christmas season — to arouse reflexion, self-examination, new effort in all human beings in respect to their love of Jesus Christ.

Thus, without condemning or disapproving the accidental activities of the Christmas season (preparing gifts, exchanging greetings, planning family feasts, decorating homes), we hereby direct the attention of every reader to what is essential. For some, that may mean reforging the bond of love between themselves and Christ after it has been severed; for others it will mean strengthening the bond that already unites them to Jesus Christ.

While the objective is simply and perhaps tritely stated, it is not one that can be blithely and easily achieved. Indeed the *sentiment* of love for Christ may be felt during the Christmas season, while nothing practical is done to make it the true virtue of *love*.

Therefore it is the purpose of this Christmas meditation to explore the four indispensable elements that enter into the love of Jesus Christ. There are four weeks in Advent, the season of preparation for Christmas. It might be well for anyone who is serious about this matter to devote each of the four weeks to one of the topics considered. They are: 1) not loving the world too much; 2) not loving self too much; 3) loving one's neighbors as representing Christ; 4) maintaining a bond of personal friendship with Christ. Under each of these headings there will be an explanation, an examination of conscience, and a practice for Advent.

I. Loving Christ means not loving the world too much.

1. Explanation: Christ, in His sermons and instructions, referred to

"the world" at various times in different senses. In one sense He used this word as representing the whole of creation, and especially the total of all human beings in the world, for example, in His saying, "I am the light of the world," (John 8:12) and, "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world." (Matt. 24:14)

On many other occasions, however, He spoke of "the world" as that part of mankind that is opposed to His word and His love. For example: "If the world hate you, know that it hath hated Me before you." (John 15:18) "My kingdom is not of this world." (John 18:36) Sometimes He speaks of "the world" as merely smothering the love of truth and of Himself and His word, as when, in the parable of the seed, He speaks of that seed which bears no fruit because "the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts after other things entering in choke the word." (Mark 4:19)

In this latter sense there is a battle for your soul being waged between all that Christ stands for and all that the world stands for. You sell out to the world by any form of mortal sin. You compromise with the spirit of the world by habitual venial sin. You grow progressively weaker in your love of Christ to the extent that you permit "the cares and riches of the world" to smother the thought of Christ and the words of Christ in your mind.

2. Self-examination: Have I purchased something that the world

could give me at the price of mortal sin?

Have I joined the world in rebellion against Christ because of the crosses He has asked me to bear?

Am I so concerned with food and drink and pleasure and prospects of future affluence in this world that rarely does the thought of Christ ever cross my mind, and rarely do I make any sacrifice for Him?

Can I face, even theoretically, the possibility of death, of serious illness, of poverty, of loss of loved ones, without panic or fright?

Have I tied up my time so completely with business pursuits and social engagements and worldly pleasures that Christ rarely enters my consciousness?

Have I accepted and built into my daily consciousness the truth that my perfect happiness will be found only in heaven, not in this passing world?

3. Practice: Deny yourself, for one full week, all use of radio, television, daily newspapers and secular books and magazines. If your courage is not quite up to renouncing all these voices of the world, give up at least one of them to which you have been addicted.

Do this specifically and directly for the love of Christ. Fill in the void created in your life by this renunciation with one of the suggestions made under topic IV below.

II. Loving Christ means not loving yourself too much.

1. Explanation: Here again a distinction must be made. You are

bound to love yourself as God loves you. This means that you are bound to desire and work for the everlasting goods that God wants you to have.

Loving self too much means loving the baser things that your nature craves even when the enjoyment of these things is contrary to the love of God and your own permanent welfare. You have certain animal appetites that are always blindly seeking satisfactions but which, even when you go all out to satisfy them, do not bring peace to your soul. Such are the appetites for sex pleasure, for food and drink, for possessions and honors in the world.

You love yourself too much if you do not direct, control and govern these appetites so that they are given no satisfactions that are contrary to the will of God. You love yourself too much if you never mortify any of your animal appetites in order to train them into submission to the will of God and the love of Christ.

2. Self-examination: Have I habitually or occasionally, with full deliberation, satisfied a bodily appetite (for sex pleasure, or forbidden foods, or excessive drinking of intoxicants) that I knew to be contrary to the will of God?

Have I, through overeating, late hours, idleness, excessive sleeping, allowed creature comforts to occupy my attention to the extent that I seldom thought of the love of Jesus Christ?

Have I complained when circumstances deprived me of certain bodily comforts and pleasures?

Must I say that I rarely deny my-

self any indulgence in pleasure unless forced by circumstances to do so, and then with grumbling?

3. Practice: Give up drinking intoxicants in any form, eating sweets and desserts, and nibbling between meals for one week during Advent. If this program is too much for your courage, give up *one* of the things mentioned — the one in which you have been most regularly indulging.

Do this specifically and intentionally for the love of Jesus Christ. Each time you feel the pinch of your chosen mortification, make an act of love of Jesus Christ and unite your self-denial to His sufferings and hardships for all mankind.

III. Loving Christ means loving all your fellow human beings as representatives of Christ.

1. Explanation: The Son of God came into the world on Christmas with an infinite love for every human being who would ever be created, even for those who would be great sinners, and for those who would hate Him. He suffered immeasurably for all sinners to prove this love.

Against this background, He demanded that all His followers love their fellow men as He loved them. Indeed, He commanded them to see Himself in their neighbors, going so far as to say that whatever good or bad things are done to one of His least brethren are done to Him.

The Christmas season is therefore preeminently a time for checking on one's love of Christ as manifested toward other human beings. And that means not only toward those to

whom one is sentimentally inclined to give Christmas presents and greetings, but toward one's enemies, the needy and poor, the least lovable in one's circle of associations and contacts.

2. Self-examination: Is there any one whom I meet often or rarely toward whom I show enmity, coldness, unwillingness to forgive wrongs that person has done to me?

In my own household am I frequently cross and irritable and quarrelsome toward anyone? Or am I grumpy and addicted to nagging and grudge-bearing toward a member of my household?

Am I generous or niggardly in giving alms to the poor around me, and to those causes that represent suffering humanity anywhere in the world?

Have I learned to hide feelings of sensitiveness, resentment, anger and antipathy for individuals who cross my path?

Am I truly and alertly conscious that each of my fellow human beings represents Jesus Christ, and that I shall be judged by Christ as having done to Him what I have done to other human beings?

3. Practices: 1) Set aside a certain time each day for thoroughly reviewing your mode of conduct toward others, especially those in your own household, and resolve each day to eliminate the faults of which you find yourself guilty.

2) Make some positive sacrifice of time or money or service in behalf

of one class of poor or suffering humanity in your community.

IV. Loving Christ means maintaining personal contact with Him through the means He established for this purpose.

1. Explanation: The important words here are "through the means He established." You cannot begin to love Jesus Christ, and you cannot grow in your love for Him, without doing these four things: 1) learning to know more about Him; 2) thinking about Him in relation to your joys and sorrows; 3) speaking to Him in frequent prayer; 4) reaching out to touch Him and embrace Him often in the Church and the Mass and the sacraments in which He appears.

2. Self-examination: How long is it since I read the Gospels, or any commentary on the life of Jesus Christ?

Do whole days, or many hours of each day, pass by without the thought of Jesus Christ ever coming to my mind?

Are my daily prayers said with regularity, and if they are, are they said with consciousness that I am truly addressing myself to Jesus Christ as the mother who holds Him in her arms?

Do I rarely attend Mass on a weekday and even more rarely embrace Jesus Christ in Holy Communion?

Do I think of my being a Catholic as uniting me to the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, making me live and breathe and act in Him?

3. Practice: Receive Holy Communion every day for one week, or for all four weeks of Advent, and use the time of thanksgiving for these purposes: 1) to resolve to read something about Jesus Christ during that day; 2) to determine that the thought of Christ will be recalled often during that day, especially in temptation, in sorrow, and in business or domestic problems; 3) to promise fidelity in prayers before and after meals, in the evening before retiring, and in moments of idleness or during occupations that do not tax the mind; 4) to guarantee to Christ that you will return to Mass and Holy Communion as frequently as possible.

It will be impossible for anyone to put into practice even a part of this program without emerging from the Christmas season a greater and more fervent lover of Jesus Christ. To be a true lover of Jesus Christ Who was born on Christmas day is the only security from despair and frustration in this world, the only key to a life of peace and fruitfulness for others, the only goal that contains in itself an eternity of happiness.

Cars that ran away — with no driver behind the wheel — killed 30 people in the United States last year, according to a report released by The Travelers Insurance Companies.



Thoughts for the Shut-in

The Gift of Myrrh

Leonard F. Hyland, C.S.S.R.

ST. MATTHEW, in his Gospel devotes a chapter to the story of the Magi, and tells about their coming from a great distance, led by a star, to adore the newborn King. Even so, he does not give us very many details about them. He does not tell us how many of them there were; he says simply that they "came from the East." He does not even tell us their names.

Tradition and legend have of course filled out the Gospel account. It is said that there were three of these Magi, that they were kings, and that their names were Caspar, Balthasar, and Melchior.

St. Matthew mentions the following mysterious and intriguing detail of their visit to Bethlehem. "Opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh." (Matthew 2:11)

Christian writers have delighted in speculating on the significance of this threefold gift. Thus gold, as the royal metal, can be said to stand for adoration. Frankincense, which gives off a sweet-smelling fragrance when burned, represents humble prayer rising up to heaven.

The third gift of myrrh is the most mysterious of all and has a special meaning for shut-ins and all who have a special cross to bear.

Myrrh is an aromatic gum resin that exudes from a certain type of tree in the Orient. The tree must be gashed before the resin appears. Surely it is within the bounds of reason to see in this a sign and symbol of sacrifice.

Instinctively the Magi felt that this gift was appropriate for the newborn King, born in such stark poverty and hardship. Instinctively they felt the need of dramatizing their own glad willingness to sacrifice all they possessed in order to prove their loyalty to God.

Imitating the Magi, all shut-ins can please the divine Infant by offering Him their own gift of myrrh during the Christmas season. Let them make a special effort to be patient and cheerful and entirely resigned to God's holy will. In this way they will surely please Him, and into their hearts the divine Infant will instil the peace of which the angels sang to the shepherds of Bethlehem.

CONVERSATION PEACE

Who is so wise as to be able fully to know all things? Be not over-confident, therefore, in your own sentiments or opinions, but be ready with pleasure to hear the opinions and sentiments of others.

Imitation

Roses in December, found on a barren
hill that could hardly grow cactus,
were the sign the bishop needed.

GUADALUPE

REVISITED

JOSEPH PEIFER, C.SS.R.

IN THE early morning fog that caressed the hill called Tepeyac, I wove my way through the crowded main plaza in front of the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. It was the first day of the solemn novena of *La Guadalupita*, the affectionate title given to Guadalupe by her beloved Mexican people. Though it was only six o'clock in the morning, a great throng of Mary's children (called in Spanish *Guadalupanas*) already knelt in the huge basilica or were gathering outside to sing the *mananitas*, a sort of hymn-serenade sung at dawn's first light to the queen of heaven.

Earlier, as I drove up the avenue that approaches the shrine, I saw what is a familiar sight in this village in the suburbs of Mexico City — a long line of pilgrims walking, praying, singing, and in some instances crawling on their knees, making their way down the parkway in the middle of the avenue.

Banners waved, proclaiming the allegiance of the factory workers to their queen. Gladioli stood crisp and beautiful in the arms of a double row of men at the head of the procession. Candles in the hands of all flickered in the still air. The *honor guard* of this group carried a huge floral piece, about six feet high, that was to be presented at the shrine and take its place with dozens more just like it that line the walls on the Gospel side within the basilica. Last of all came the particular picture of Guadalupe that, I imagine, holds a place of honor in the factory of these workers.

I had seen similar pictures in the factories of Mexico on many occasions. Now, however, this picture had been taken down and framed with roses and carried on the shoulders of four privileged workers.

Quite naturally, this pilgrimage, a group of factory workers from Mexico City and the neighboring town of the famous floating gardens, Xochimilco, was larger than usual. Pilgrims file to Tepeyac all year long. But with the feast of Guadalupe fast

approaching, a fever was beginning to mount, a fever that would break with all the emotions and unselfconscious piety of the Latin mentality on December 12, the feastday itself.

I hurried inside. I say I hurried; rather I tried to hurry, but the pressing crowd made progress quite slow. The solemn high Mass had just begun and the *Kyrie* of the *Missa de Angelis* invaded the air with its Gregorian simplicity. Actually, I had arrived early and had not anticipated this solemn high Mass. I was early, because weeks before I had arranged with the basilica sacristan to say holy Mass at the shrine at 6:30 that morning.

However unexpected the solemn high Mass was to me, I was grateful for it. Not only was it a beautiful time for my own meditation before my Mass, but it also afforded me the opportunity of what might be called "seeing this great shrine of Mary in action."

I felt myself at one and the same time a tourist, a pilgrim and a priest preparing for a thrilling experience of saying Mass at one of our Lady's world-famous and miraculous shrines. I have never been privileged to travel in Europe or visit the famous shrines of our Lady at Lourdes or Fatima or the many others, but I doubt if I could have been any more thrilled than I was at that moment in the anticipation of celebrating Mass at Guadalupe.

WE Americans sometimes forget that one of the great apparitions of Mary, one of the most famous in history, took place right in

our own hemisphere, right within the heart of the Americas, when she appeared to Juan Diego in 1531 at Guadalupe.

I am afraid my meditation began rather poorly that morning, according to ascetical standards. As I knelt at the side of the sanctuary, I could not help looking around from my vantage point at the multitude of people and observe the constant comings and goings of the pilgrims in the church. At first it looked to me like confusion bordering on the disrespectful. I believe many visitors and particularly we Americans, accustomed to our well-ordered congregations and our Mass schedules "every hour on the hour," are inclined to be surprised by this constant milling about at Guadalupe; however, it took only a few moments to realize why it was going on. For one thing, Mass at the main altar is scheduled every half hour all morning long. In order to expedite matters, no time is taken from the Mass for distributing Holy Communion. Those going to Communion proceed to the Blessed Sacrament chapel where several priests were giving Communion. This, I later observed, went on all morning.

Another factor that added to the constant motion was the arrangement for going to confession. It seemed that every corner of the basilica boasted a priest, sitting in the open on a small chair, hearing confessions. At each shriving zone stood a line of penitents, presenting a scene very much similar to our churches on

Holy Saturday night or Christmas eve.

Further, with Masses also being celebrated at four or five side altars, pilgrims could find a Mass just beginning, no matter when they entered. Once they attended one of these side-altar Masses, they would proceed to pay their respects to *la madrecita*, by going on their knees up to the shrine, or by kneeling with arms outstretched before it, quite oblivious to the goings-on at the main altar.

All this hubbub distracted me in my meditation for the first few moments. Yet it gave me food for thought. All those Communions and confessions, all these holy Masses, and all the other evidences of love, devotion and fervor, verified the old saying, "To Jesus through Mary."

And with that, my attention turned to the heart of this great throng, the altar. Up, up my eyes wandered, attracted by the same thing that had attracted these people from miles away — *the picture*.

Yet could you call it a picture? This is in the realm of the miraculous, the mysterious. Not a painting, not a photo — what do you call it? Whatever it is called, there it hung, encased in glass above the main altar — Our Lady of Guadalupe — fashioned in a miraculous manner on the *tilma* or mantle of Juan Diego, the pious Indian of Quauititlan, on December 12, 1531.

As I gazed, fascinated, my mind wandered back to the amazement of that moment when Juan Diego faced bishop-elect Juan de Zumarra, first

bishop of Mexico, with the *tilma* full of roses he had gathered on the barren hill of Tepeyac at the request of the Blessed Mother. He believed that these roses were the sign he needed to prove to the bishop that his report of Mary's appearance to him was not the product of an overactive imagination, but truly a heavenly visitation. Roses in December! Found on a barren hill that could hardly grow cactus!

What a moment of truth it was, however, when the *tilma* was unfurled! The December roses fell to the ground, and the image of our Lady appeared before the astonished eyes of all. The bishop and all his household fell on their knees. Juan Diego himself was the most surprised of all.

How that image has confounded the skeptics through the years! No earthly paint is this. Scientific investigation has found no pigmentation known to man or known in ages past that can account for the coloring. No brush marks, pencil lines or other human sketching explain the form. No weaving, embroidery or other fancywork of the most skilled artisan can match this; for here is a common mantle-like piece of cloth, such as is worn even today by many of the pilgrims who haunt this sacred hill, yet with more artistry than is within the human hand to produce.

I IMAGINE many a scoffer has come to Guadalupe. I know many an unbelieving tourist has trod that hill only because it is the thing to do — and perhaps has gone away with a smirk on his face. I have heard

on many sides, both in Mexico and in the United States, the harsh criticism of the emotions displayed by the pilgrims — the labels of "superstition" cast on many of the practices that go on at the shrine — the so-called ignorance that is said to dupe the poor and uneducated and seems to hypnotize them.

Needless to say, human beings can be misguided and turn true faith into superstitions, true religion into pure emotionalism, and substitute rites and pet prayers and devotions for the sacraments and the observance of God's laws. This can happen not only at Guadalupe, but at Lourdes and Fatima and in your own parish church as well.

But let the scoffers scoff and smirks smirk and critics criticize; there still is the undeniable and scientific fact that this image, given to Juan Diego, on the hill called Tepeyac, in December, 1531, portraying Our Lady of Guadalupe, is be-

yond a doubt *not of this earth*. It has faced the scientific eye for centuries, and still it forces the scientists to shake their heads and say that it couldn't be done by any known material.

This image is an undeniable sign that the Blessed Mother truly appeared to Juan Diego. Power has gone forth from this place. Miracles have been worked. Prayers, Masses, confessions and Communions have drawn the people to the one true God. The faith of the Mexican people has been kept alive by the haven of Mary which is Guadalupe.

These things I thought as I knelt there looking at the miraculous picture on that cold December morning — a picture that today is still as bright and colorful as it was the day in 1531 when Juan Diego displayed it in the presence of the first bishop of Mexico.

Then I rose from my knees and vested for Mass.

LIGUORIAN BINDERS

We have had hard-cover binders made to order for holding 12 copies of THE LIGUORIAN in a single volume. Anyone can insert the issues in the binder. Those who preserve their copies of THE LIGUORIAN for reference will find the binders very handy, with the index always at the end of the December issue. Order binders from THE LIGUORIAN, Liguori, Mo., at \$2.50 each.

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IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS

Please notify us promptly of your change of address, giving both your old and new address. It makes it easy for our office if you cut your stenciled address from the rear cover of one of your issues of THE LIGUORIAN and send it in when asking for a change of address. Notify us by the tenth of the month if your copy for that month has not been delivered.



Problems of Professional and Business People

How Much May the Dealer Charge?

PROBLEM: We have only one house painter in our small town, and he is dependent for his livelihood on odd jobs, which are not very frequent, because most of our people have the "do-it-yourself" habit. Recently the painter was engaged by the town's wealthiest citizen to paint his house and garage—a very desirable job, which would bring considerable profit. But when our painter was preparing to set out for his first day's work, he found that he needed a new brush, and so he went to the town's general store to buy one. The owner of the store had several paintbrushes in stock; but he knew that the painter stood in great need of a brush at once, and that he could not obtain one anywhere else in the vicinity. So, instead of \$3, the regular price, he demanded \$15. He argued that, since the painter was going to make \$25 a day, he could justly claim a share of the profit. Was the storekeeper entitled to raise the price of the brush in this manner?

SOLUTION: Theologians teach that there are three forms of price that may be lawfully charged in the contract of buying and selling. The first is the legal price — a price established by civil law. Legal prices for some commodities were established in the United

States during World War II. Generally speaking, this kind of price must be accepted in conscience by those who buy or sell the particular articles.

The second is the conventional price. This is left to the discretion and choice of the parties engaged in the transaction. It is generally applied to the sale of works of art, antiques, curios, etc., which are luxuries, not necessary for sustenance or reasonable livelihood. There is no set price for such objects; and a just price is whatever the parties agree on.

The third type of just price is the common (or market) price. It is to be used in the buying and selling of the ordinary necessities of life, such as food, clothes, tools, houses, etc. This type of price is established by the usage of the place and time, and depends on such factors as the amount of labor required to produce or procure the object, its rarity, the current value of money, etc. This admits of some, but not much, variation. For example, in the same place and at the same time the price of a dozen eggs might vary between 75c and 85c. A dealer who without reasonable cause charges a customer more than the highest amount of the common price sins against justice, and is bound to restitution.

There could be circumstances that would justify a dealer in charging more than the common price in certain circumstances. For example, a grocer may have only one dozen eggs left in the store, and he would like to have them for his own family. But, if he decides to sell them to a customer who is very anxious to procure them, he might charge \$1.50. Again, if a dealer is aware that the price of a commodity is soon to go up, he could, by anticipation, charge the new price. But merely the fact that the customer is in great need of some article and cannot get it elsewhere does not give the dealer the right to raise the price. Thus, in the present instance, the storekeeper is not justified in charging the painter a price five times as great as the common price.

The argument that the painter is about to undertake a job that will be very lucrative does not alter this decision. For this fact is due to the arrangement made between himself and the rich man and to the painter's skill—not to any contribution on the part of the storekeeper. Hence, the storekeeper is guilty of injustice and avarice by forcing the painter into paying an extravagant price, just because he needs the brush. Actually, the storekeeper is almost as wicked as a druggist who would demand an excessive price for a box of nitrogen tablets to relieve a man afflicted with heart disease who can obtain the remedy only in this particular store.

Very Rev. Francis J. Connell,
C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.,
The Catholic University of America

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO ALL OUR WIVES AND HUSBANDS

Husbands, wives, creators blest,
Life He gives at your behest,
He Who in this early morn
Chose in squalor to be born.

Look into the sheepfold's hut—
Why the squalor, poorness, but
That your child might have the best:
Life divine in Him possessed.

TO ALL OUR SINGLE PEOPLE

He Who when becoming man
Sought no lovers other than
Mother, foster-father, then
All His sinful fellow men—

Loves you, celibate, and pleads:
"Let me answer all your needs;
Let my love your lifetime bless,
Banishing all loneliness."

The Church wishes the laity to participate fully in the Mass. Here is the basis for a right understanding of this participation.

A MAP

HENRY V. SATTLER, C.SS.R.

BEFORE Pope Pius XII died, he issued a decree demanding greater and deeper participation by the laity in the Mass. He indicated that the least possible participation would be the response by the entire congregation of *Et cum spiritu tuo* to the priest's *Dominus vobiscum*. He asked that the laity should gradually learn the maximum possible active participation. He wanted them to join in the responses which the server usually has made alone. He wanted them to say with the priest the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, the *Credo*, the *Sanctus*, the *Pater Noster* and the *Agnus Dei*. Ultimately, he wished the laity to sing the Mass.

As a result of his wishes, all over the world Catholics are beginning to study the Mass. They are learning Latin, at least sufficiently well so as to be able to pronounce it. They are beginning to discuss the various degrees of close participation. Some laymen are being trained to read the epistle and Gospel in the vernacular while the priest reads it in Latin at the altar. Enthusiasts for participation are learning the rudiments of Gregorian chant so that they can

FOR THE MASS

achieve the ideal of involving the entire congregation in singing the Mass.

Like every enthusiasm, the enthusiasm for participation in the Mass has its dangers. People can become so involved in the *mechanics* of participation that they forget what the Mass is. In attempting to learn the details of the liturgy, it is easy to lose the spirit of the liturgy. We must always beware of "not seeing the woods for the trees." This warning is not meant to discourage the salutary drive toward complete participation of the laity in the Mass. It is only an insistence that we must know the Mass in its major dimensions in order to fit all the parts properly into the whole. Though the roads which bring travelers to a great

city may have their special value, reaching the city is the goal; the roads are only the means.

It is easy for the smallest child to follow the Mass if he remembers that the Mass is divided into three sections. In each section we *speak to, or give something to God, and He, in turn, speaks, or gives something, to us.*

Beginning with the prayers at the foot of the altar, alternating with the priest who speaks in our name, we talk to God. We tell Him how joyful it makes us to go up to His altar. Recognizing our many past sins and faults, we confess our sins and beg for forgiveness. After a brief moment to learn the keynote of the Mass in the *Introit*, we repeat a nine-fold cry for mercy in the *Kyrie Eleison*. Then we praise God, simply because He is great and good in Himself, when we join the priest in the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. We conclude our prayer by begging Him for the helps and graces we need, both spiritual and temporal, as we say, *Amen*, to the collect of the Mass.

Having spoken to God in joy, sorrow, praise, adoration, propitiation and petition, we await God's answer to us. Never can He be outdone in generosity. If we will but speak to Him in the simplest of terms, He will not hesitate to speak to us. He speaks to us, first, in the words of the epistle, inspired words usually taken from the letters the apostles wrote to the early Christians. Then He speaks to us in the Gospel, usually in the words of His own Son.

But, lest we feel that these words are outdated, He speaks to us finally through His Church in the homily or sermon delivered by the priest. In the major Masses of the year, we respond to His words by a joyous *Credo* — "I believe. . . ."

THE second part of the Mass begins with the offertory. Realizing our utter dependence upon God, we give Him our lives. We give Him our bodies and souls, our daily duties, our joys, sorrows, our work and recreation, our food — yes, and even our emptiness. How can we symbolize this gift better than by offering Him bread and wine, the simplest food and drink which support the lives of all the world?

It is interesting to recall that the early Christians brought the product of their own hands to symbolize this gift of self. From the skills from which they made their living, they presented a portion in recognition that all their living belongs to God. It was from these gifts of bread, wine, grapes, cloth and all handiwork, that the early Church selected the bread and wine for use at Mass and supported the clergy and the poor.

It is interesting, also, to recall that in the western Church, the hosts are now round pieces of unleavened bread. They symbolize the shape of the coins which the members of the growing Church found more practical to offer instead of the unwieldy products of their labor. Our present offering collection, then, is not so

much a method of maintaining the Church as it is a sign that, taking from the income with which we support our lives, we are giving those lives to Christ.

God is all-perfect and complete. He does not need our gift of self. Nevertheless, He cannot be outdone in generosity. Taking our lives, symbolized by the bread and wine, He transforms them into the body and blood, soul and divinity of His very own Son. At the consecration, when bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ, our lives are to be transformed into the life of Christ.

WE NOW come to the third part of the Mass. At this moment we have on our altars a really worthwhile gift to offer God. Of what real value are our prayers, or even our lives? All that we have and all that we are already belongs to God! But now we have His very own Son on our altars, One Who is both God and man. Since it is by the transformation of our own source of life, bread and wine, that this gift is here, then it is our transformed (divine) life which is offered to God in Christ.

Again, God cannot be outdone. Taking our lives as offered by Christ,

and taking the offering which Christ Himself offers in our name, He returns that Christ to us in Holy Communion. Not content that our lives should be offered through Christ, He insists that we must feed our supernatural life with the flesh of His Son. After the reception of Christ in Holy Communion, the Mass leaves us almost speechless. There seems nothing left to do but wash the few "dishes," say a brief prayer of thanksgiving, and be sent out into the world (*Ite, missa est*), to carry Christ into the home, business, political, recreational, national and international life we must live in the twentieth century.

This is the simple road map of the Mass. We speak to God; God speaks to us. We offer Him our lives; He transforms our gift into the flesh of Christ. We offer His Son; He gives that Son to be received into our hearts.

If we keep this brief road map in mind, all our avenues of "participation" will lead us to the heart of the Mass itself. If we forget the map, our journeys in participation may be interesting, but we will lose our way to real unity with Christ in the Mass.

FULL STOP AT ONCE

We must be on our guard in the beginning of a temptation; for then the enemy is more easily overcome, if he be not suffered to enter the door of the mind, but is withheld upon the threshold the very moment that he knocks on the door. For first there comes into the mind a simple thought; then a strong imagination; afterward delight and then only the evil consent. And so, little by little, the enemy gains full entrance when he is not resisted in the beginning.

Imitation

FEATURE LETTER

Rocks and Roses for My Husband!

Dear Fathers:

In the September LIGUORIAN you published a letter from J. P. F. who, without apparently wanting to, drew aside the curtains on the windows of his home and allowed your readers to get a good look at the comedy-tragedy which he is producing and directing, and in which he is playing the leading role. I can see him, wearing the mask of a husband, strutting about on the boards of his stage-scenery home, stamping his foot and shouting and insisting that the play is titled, *This Is Christian Marriage*.

He said he expected to see a lot of letters about your article on the faults of husbands. I can understand why he was disappointed. Husbands — the whole lot of them — wouldn't admit to any faults, and the wives are too loyal to expose them.

He seems to be so certain that he is not only God's gift to his wife — but to all womankind. And wasn't his wife just ever so lucky to land him? It might be good to tie this man to the nearest weeping willow tree

until he learns to cry. One cannot understand tender dreams and little joys until one has learned to weep.

I had intended never again to dig into this pile of debris, which we never seem to be able to sweep out of our homes and which we refer to with a faraway look into the clouds as the faults of husbands. Actually this seemingly insurmountable mountain of husbandly imperfections has become my "bag of gems" which I offer up to Jesus. But since this Mr. J. P. F. committed the strategic error of digging into the pile of chips on my shoulder, let me have at him and all husbands who are on his team.

A rerun of all the far-from-lovable traits of our spouses would fill volumes — volumes of useless chitchat, it is true. Even if they were thrown with considerable violence they would have about as much effect on the armor-plated skin of husbands as overcooked peas have when tossed against the hide of an elephant. Indeed, science has not produced an instrument strong enough and sharp

enough to pierce the many-layered tough hide of the prime egotist we call husband.

Let me describe him. He gets up in the morning with an ugly scowl and carefully touches a drop of water to his eyes, lest he disturb that stubborn head still in slumber. He is fit company for neither man nor beast until nightfall, when it's time to scoot uptown to play cards and drink beer with the boys. Or if it's a night off for the boys to rest up for a change, he will become a human slip cover for an easy chair or the davenport.

He has an exaggerated idea of his own worth and importance, and this idea, which is already hugely overweight, must be fed incessantly.

And the wife? Well, after years of pampering him who insists on being the joyless one, the wife gives up. She learns to live with her own thoughts which are at least reasonably pleasant, when she can get them away from the subject of her husband, for the world is such a good place to live in, in spite of him. Then the clod gets whimpery and accuses her of conniving against him, because she seems to be getting some happiness out of life in spite of him.

Life and love and sex are such beautiful gifts from God! But he is unreasonable. This blustering, billowing bag of wind thinks the whole lot of these things was created for him alone to squander in selfish extravagance.

He understands no language other than his own brutality. He berates, belittles and bellows like the big bull-y he is. Mental cruelty, yes!

Even physical cruelty he can dish out with a manly flourish.

A man's hand is a heavy hand. His scorn and disdain are hard to bear.

He makes demands on his wife when he is drunk and when he is sober. Isn't he the MAN of the house? She may be physically indisposed. Doesn't matter. Not her convenience or disposition or health — just the yawning, endless abyss of his insatiable hunger that knows no control. Though sexually well-attuned, how long can a wife see this as love?

All she sees is the hungry, self-indulgent face before her, worn by a creature who knows not that it takes such little things to please a woman. When a woman is pleased, she is always acquiescent and understanding.

And then, if she becomes "duck soup" for some other phony who comes along like a bad sheep in wolf's clothing, somebody who, with a few little clever kindnesses tricks her and makes her feel she's worth a million, the poor dolt of a husband is stupefied. And when the devil's triumph is complete in playing one against the other, the outraged husband is so bewildered that he cannot even begin to understand why his wife has been found weak and wanting.

Then her heart really splinters into 999 little bits, and she finds the gritty taste of ashes in her mouth. She weeps many salty tears in realizing that what could have been her greatest moment of triumph has instead turned out to be her own failure and defeat. Yet, when her husband married her, her love was so

complete that if he had been a real man he could have made her love double itself a thousand times over with so little effort.

By this time I must have created the impression that I am advancing the opinion that there is not one worthwhile husband in the world, and that every one of them ought to be run out of town. Not so! There are many good husbands who deserve all the credit in the world. But this Mr. J. P. F., whose letter got me started on all this, is still standing squarely in front of me, and he, together with the all-too-many husbands like him, is my target for today.

These low-grade husbands turned out to be such phonies! Well, let's get back to earth slowly now and admit that we women are phonies, too. We go about, murmuring platitudes about all these problems and keep dishing out the kind of spirituality that is about as genuine as the friendliness demonstrated by the two principals in a championship prize fight at the weighing-in ceremony for the benefit of the reporters and photographers from the press.

However, we women recognize our limitations much sooner than men recognize theirs. Witness the attendance at any weekday Mass and at devotions in the church during the week. If that self-esteem of his would admit the need of God's help in purifying this tainted nature of ours, perhaps at least the twilight years could be peaceful; we could enjoy an unselfish love so much sweeter than that of the tempestuous years when affections are so peppery, pos-

sessive and sometimes filled with horrifying abuses of the magnificent gift of sex. One gets heart-weary living with a child who is wearing a man's body.

It takes such little kindnesses to make the heart shine and glow like a million happy, sparkling fireflies in the night. The joyless ones use a loving touch only as a means to a selfish end, and then wonder why their life is so forlorn and miserable.

It is satisfying at long last to understand that "None can hurt the heart that loves Thee;" to find that in the Mass you have been given something "truly good" to offer, as in the lovely poem, *At the Preface* — all "to remove the harmful growth of self."

After this tirade, I have the unhappy feeling that J. P. F. who wrote the letter that set me off, doesn't deserve all the things I have said. He might have just slyly thrown out a little bait for some tame dame to nibble on. I not only nibbled. I swallowed.

Though I've tried a dozen times to jam one of your issues down the throat of my honorable spouse (especially *Ten Signs of Immaturity!*), I have been unsuccessful to date. His answer? "I don't need to read spiritual things. I've got no sins."

What a guy!

If you print this, let it be anonymous, or I'll find myself strung up in the nearest pine tree and that's a prickly perch at best. For, could I possibly be talking about him? Perish the thought. He's the most. And poor as he is, he's mine! The dope! N. N.

Anon.

SIDEGLANCES ☺ ☺

For Wives of Alcoholics

FEW people have a heavier cross in life than the wives of alcoholics. It is equally true that there is widespread ignorance on the part of such wives as to what kind of program will help their husbands and make life easier for themselves at the same time.

There is a little pamphlet available called "Do's and Don'ts for the Wives of Alcoholics." The material in it was first published in *Inventory*, an organ of the North Carolina Alcoholic Rehabilitation Program. This was turned into a pamphlet by the Alcoholism Research Foundation, 9 Bedford Road, Toronto 5, Canada. It is now distributed by the National Council on Alcoholism, 2 E. 103rd St., New York 29, N. Y.

The rules set down in this pamphlet offer an excellent examination of conscience for wives whose husbands are excessive and compulsive drinkers. Though the pamphlet does not delve into spiritual motivation and means, it can be vigorously stated that every item in the program will be cheerfully and effectively carried out only by wives who spiritualize their whole outlook, who see God's will in the rules laid down, and who use a great deal of pray-

By the Bystander

er to add God's grace to their own human efforts.

With full credit to the Alcoholic Rehabilitation groups that are responsible for the pamphlet, we here summarize and paraphrase the rules it lays down for wives of alcoholics.

1. Learn the facts about alcoholism.

These facts can be gathered from publications of Alcoholics Anonymous, Alcoholic Research Centers, sympathetic doctors and clergymen, social workers, wives of other alcoholics.

2. Develop an attitude in keeping with the facts you have learned.

This means surrendering once and for all the old notion that there is nothing wrong with an alcoholic that his own will power, goaded by you, cannot cure.

3. Avoid "home treatment" methods for curing your husband.

The home treatments tried by many a wife of an alcoholic that have almost invariably failed are preaching, lecturing, nagging, reasoning, begging, etc. Equally futile is the appeal, "If you love me, you will give up drinking." Or, "See what you are doing to your children!" Also to be avoided is

the "martyr-like" attitude, which without words can make the alcoholic more compulsive in his drinking than ever. Don't threaten him, unless, under the guidance of others, you fully intend to carry out your threats.

Realize too that you cannot cure an alcoholic merely by hiding all liquor from him or by dramatically pouring it down the sink. Nor can you cure him by offering to drink with him, thinking that you will be able to hold him to moderation.

4. Talk about your problem to someone other than relatives and close friends.

These latter can easily, by reason of their love for you, lead you astray into wrong courses of action. Talk to those who know alcoholism.

5. Take a personal inventory of yourself.

While you have been priding yourself on not being an alcoholic, self-examination may reveal many traits in yourself that have contributed to your husband's compulsive drinking. Face those bad traits boldly, and start waging a spiritual battle against them.

6. Go to a treatment center for alcoholics, or to an A. A. group.

Attached to some A. A. groups there is a wives' section. Attend its meetings if there is such. If not, attend the regular meetings of A. A. itself. Many wives have been greatly helped by these meetings.

7. Try to develop a more thoughtful, positive attitude toward your husband.

This requires a preliminary step which many wives never take, namely, that of "forgiving" the alcoholic husband. After forgiveness, a wife must learn to treat her husband as a man and not as a child, even though he acts like the latter.

8. Don't make a violent or nagging issue over his slowness about seeking treatment.

Rather manifest a calm confidence that he will seek treatment and will win his battle in the end.

9. Don't be jealous when you learn that he is getting help from other persons than yourself.

The tendency of some wives is to resent the fact that, when they (the wives) have failed to cure their husbands, others, sometimes strangers, succeed. Remember that, just as a doctor is needed to cure pneumonia, so outside help is needed for alcoholics.

10. Don't expect an immediate and complete cure after treatment has begun.

There may be relapses and days of tension and severe trial. Don't flare up over these; accept them calmly, and with evident confidence that the setback will be temporary.

11. Maintain a healthy emotional atmosphere in your home.

This is where the mature, spiritually adult wife distinguishes herself from the immature. The latter, in the presence of alcohol-

ism, "goes to pieces;" she has no control over her emotions of self-pity, resentment, anger, unforgivingness. The adult and mature wife realizes that she must give her home an appearance that will inspire her alcoholic husband to want to be part of it, and she governs her emotions accordingly.

12. Don't try to protect your husband against alcohol.

He has to learn to live in a world where alcohol will never be far out of reach. If you warn all your friends never to have any around when he is present, and try to prevent him from even seeing a bottle or a highball, your very effort will defeat itself.

13. Encourage any new interests or activities that he begins to take up, even if you do not understand them or they do not appeal to you.

Best of all, try to find new ways of sharing interests and pleasures with him.

14. Don't be discouraged over your own mistakes or his relapses.

You will say the wrong thing at times; and he will disappoint you sometimes most unexpectedly. Just determine not to repeat your mistakes and not to give up when he relapses.

15. Pass on your knowledge of alcoholism to others in the same need.

You will be surprised to find how much encouragement and help you yourself receive just from trying to be of assistance to others.

WE repeat that it will not be possible for any wife to live up to these rules unless she herself has adopted a definite spiritual program. This means regular daily prayer, frequent self-examination, some spiritual reading and meditation, and regular recourse to the sacraments. These means will not only help her to carry her cross, but will be effective in eventually bringing about the lifting of the cross from her shoulders.

HOW CAN THEY DO IT?

With human beings the saying holds, "As long as there is life there is hope." We can reconsider. We can choose and reject and choose again; even when there is question of choosing serious sin and rejecting God and then choosing God again. If time and God's grace and mercy for us are not used up we can choose to repent. There is still a chance. But when death strikes there is no more choice for us. The last choice we make is our choice forever.

When we look up at heaven and think of the fallen angels choosing to be devils forever we may say, "How could they do it?" But when the angels in heaven look down at us and see us deliberately taking the chance, by mortal sin, of living in hell forever, can you blame them if they point to us and ask each other, "How can they do it?"

THE Metropolitan Life Insurance Company has been running an advertisement in our national magazines, calling attention to some very sensible rules for motorists. The caption of the advertisement reads, "Traffic signs you don't see."

The men who exercise authority and control over our highways — whether they be federal, state, county or local — might profitably consider the project of posting these rules on signs along the highways. Business men, merchants, advertising agencies and all who are still permitted by our laws and ordinances to litter the sides of our highways with billboards, might make their campaigns less distasteful to motorists and at the same time amplify the sales power of their advertisements if they would make one of these rules part of their copy on the billboards.

These "traffic signs," states the Metropolitan advertisement, are as important to your safety as the familiar ones posted along our streets and highways.

What are these rules?

1. *Drive extra cautiously when you're upset.*

Worry or emotional disturbance can be caused by anger, resentment, stubbornness, vanity, carrying on an argument with another person in the car, thinking about a frustrating or humiliating incident in which you

Here are some rules for safe driving. You don't see them posted along the highway, but if motorists would always remember them, many accidents would be avoided.

Traffic Signs

You Don't See

M. J. HUBER, C.S.S.R.

were involved just before you began to drive, thinking of the bills you must pay on the first of the month, searching for a solution of some home or family problem.

Worry or emotional disturbance may deprive you of the alert attention to driving that today's highway conditions require. Intense concentration on some problem, distraction caused by intense emotion may make you completely unaware of the fact that you are driving a car.

Emotional stability is as important as any other single factor in main-

taining traffic safety. Drive cautiously when you're upset. Put your problems and your worries into your pocket and think them over calmly when you get to your destination.

2. Be sure your eyes are all right.

No driver ought to be satisfied with the eye test he passed ten years ago when he originally was granted his driver's license. It's good sense to have your eyes examined regularly and not to wait until you are wandering along our congested streets and highways with 75% vision. If a driver realizes that his vision is appreciably defective, especially on overcast days or at night, but in spite of this knowledge continues to drive, he is guilty of negligence and is a menace on the street or highway. Be sure your eyes are all right!

3. Never drive after drinking.

There are too many people who do not keep this rule. They have the opinion that the rule refers to drunken drivers; and who will dare to say that they have ever been inebriated?

It is not always the drunken driver who is involved in accidents; the respectable social drinkers may cause more accidents than the drunken drivers. Their reflexes, even after a few drinks, are not normal — they are slowed down — and their general attitude, which is induced by what we might call the "party spirit" at social gatherings, is not one that keeps them alert to danger.

4. Stop when you feel tired.

Since getting tired is a normal reaction for a person who drives a car

for a considerable time or distance, no one can be blamed for getting tired. But unless there are exceptional circumstances which make it really imperative, it is dangerous to keep on driving when tired.

Fatigue plays a part in many accidents, especially those accidents which happen at night. As fatigue increases, efficiency is lowered, until nodding at the wheel results.

Even a short rest at the side of the road will relieve fatigue. Letting someone else in the car take over for a while, if you don't want to stop, and getting a few winks while relaxing is another way of avoiding danger. If you are alone in the car, then *stop when you feel tired.*

5. Don't drive after taking certain medicines.

Sedatives may dull your reflexes; tranquilizers can cloud your judgment and perception. Ask your doctor about the side effects of drugs, including antihistamines and cold tablets.

6. On long drives, share the driving with others.

Even if you do not feel fatigued or tired, it is wise to budget the driving time, so that all available drivers in the car will take their turn in set periods. Or else, stop now and then on a long drive, even though you do not feel tired.

Prolonged driving, and its attendant eye, muscular and nervous strain, can build up tension which is not easily noticed, and impair your efficiency as a driver. It's a smart thing

to rest every two hours when you are driving alone.

7. Drive only when you are physically and mentally fit, and keep both hands securely on the wheel.

For your own safety, the safety of the people in your car and the safety of your fellow motorists, don't take your eyes off the road to reach for something in the back seat, or to look at a road map in your hand, or to restore peace and quiet among the children in the back seat, or to look at the person sitting next to you

while you talk to him — or her, or to put your arm around the girl friend.

While we are on this point we might as well mention that the girl friend who drapes herself over the shoulder of her boy friend who is driving and tweaks his ear and pats his cheek and thereby makes it almost impossible for the driver to react normally to a dangerous situation in the traffic on the highway, is a decided and undeniable menace to safety on the road.

**CHRISTMAS GREETINGS
TO ALL OUR SHUT-INS**

See, a manger is His bed;
See, His home a cattle-shed;
See, His tiny hands are blue—
Is He less shut-in than you?

Wait, His home will be a hill;
Wait, His body bedded will
Be on wooden cross—impaled.
Shut-in, tell me, are you nailed?

TO ALL OUR PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE

Doctor, lawyer, teacher, nurse,
Oh, how infinitely worse
All mankind would be unless
Aided by your expertness.

Saviour, Teacher, Healer, King,
Born this day in shivering,
First gave hope to hopeless men;
Live His love in you again!



Problems of Single People



Desiring Marriage Too Late

Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

PROBLEM: I am one of those who deliberately chose, despite opportunities to the contrary, to remain single. As I look back now from my early forties, these seem to have been the principal motives behind my choice: 1) I did not want to give up my independence and freedom; 2) I was acquainted with so many persons who were miserably unhappy in marriage; 3) I thought my business career would be enough to fill my life with happiness. Now I am beginning to be restless and moody and even resentful of my single state, and to wish I had a husband. But my standards are so high that I know I would not be happy except perhaps with one man in a thousand, and I know there is little chance of my meeting that one. How can I regain my peace of mind?

•

SOLUTION: You would never have lost your peace of mind if you had added to the cogent natural motives that induced you to choose the single life one more, and that the most important of all, namely, that you might live a life of higher spirituality and closer union with God. Consider how each of the motives you list could have been turned into one of high spirituality.

1) You did not want to give up your independence and freedom. You should have gone one step farther and con-

sciously decided that you wanted to be more free than married persons are to give your life to God and to the service of others. You may have thought that you could get along without the love of a husband, on whom you would be dependent, but you did not realize that no human being can get along without love. One who renounces married love must fill his heart with the love of God or else suffer frustration and misery.

2) You saw much unhappiness among your married friends. You did not realize that unhappiness among the married is always due to selfishness and/or sin. The opportunities for selfishness and sin to create conflicts are much greater in marriage than in the single life. But if selfishness rules one who has remained single, it will result in just as much unhappiness as for the married. It is not unusual for a girl to shy away from marriage because she sees so many married friends living in unhappiness and sin; but she must, if she wants to be happy herself, turn her whole life into unselfish service for others for the love of God.

3) You thought you would always be content with your business career. You would have been thus content if you had made your business career a means and not an end. You should have made it a means in two senses: first, for the sake of the service your

job would mean to others; second, for the sake of the time you could give to God and the service you could render to others outside the working hours of your job. We have known of no business or professional woman whose job alone was sufficient in itself to exclude from her life desires for the human companionship and love that leads either to marriage or sin or frustration.

All this can be phrased in a single line: there can be no real contentment in the single life without a special love of God and built up habits of unselfish, dedicated service to others. Those single persons who possess these two things make fools out of the unhappy married people who insist on patronizing or looking down their noses at those who remain single.

SERVING IN TODAY'S ARMY OF CHRIST

The world is, in fact, engaged in a spiritual combat about whose stakes no one is ignorant. An immense wave of atheism is breaking over the world and rarely has action against the religion of Christ been carried on more shrewdly and more systematically. Even in the ranks of the faithful one meets Catholics whose confidence in the mission of the Church is shaken. One sometimes even hears bitter criticism from them directed against the Church which, because of their own failings, they willingly hold responsible for the progress of her enemies, whereas these latter are held to be worthy of every indulgence.

Msgr. Montini

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What Is a

A general confession can mean the salvation of a soul. Those who need it will find that God is always ready to furnish them the grace to enable them to do it right.

General Confession?

THE subject of making a general confession has always been difficult to discuss. Advice given to one person about making a general confession may differ completely from that given to another. To one penitent a priest must say: "You are bound in conscience to make a general confession," while to another he will emphatically say, "You are forbidden to make a general confession." To yet another man or woman a priest might say: "It is not necessary for you to make a general confession, but I will gladly help you to do so."

All these cases must be considered if one wants a clear knowledge and proper guidance in the matter of making a general confession. A gen-

eral confession means the recounting of all the mortal sins of one's past life. Just as with an ordinary confession, this also means telling the number of sins and whatever *circumstances* connected with the sins would change the nature of them.

Who is obliged in conscience to make a general confession? Any person who knows that sometime in the past he did knowingly and wilfully make a bad confession, and that he never made any attempt to rectify his mistake from that time until now.

Here we must point out two very important matters demanding emphasis. One is that the penitent knows he made a bad confession. Not infrequently during a mission,

people with a delicate conscience will say, "Perhaps I made a bad confession." Or, "Certain sins of my past life keep coming before my mind. I'm afraid I made a bad confession."

People like these should not be encouraged to make a general confession, simply because it is not at all necessary. Furthermore, such encouragement could easily lead to scruples.

THE second important matter is that no attempt has been made to rectify the bad confession. Let us say it was ten years ago since that bad confession was made. A mortal sin was deliberately hidden from the confessor. During all these years the penitent went to confession and received Holy Communion regularly. It is a hard thing to say, but it must be said. This penitent has never made a good confession and has received Holy Communion unworthily for the past ten years. Now his duty is to go back over the years — to reveal the hidden sin and all the mortal sins that have been committed during that time.

On the face of it this looks like an impossible task. And you may be sure the devil will prompt the suggestion that it can't be done. However, it is not as difficult as it seems. My own experience on the missions was to speak of the matter of general confessions in such a way as to encourage those who needed it. I would say: "If you have to make a general confession, and you are afraid you cannot do so, all you have to do is come into the confessional and quietly whisper, 'Father I made

a bad confession.'" When that is said, a very large part of the job is already finished. Once the confessor knows that, he will take over and by question and answer help his penitent. What the penitent thought would be a most difficult task now becomes easy. Here the kindness of the priest will strengthen the good will of his penitent, and the grace of God will bring peace at last to a tortured soul.

To scrupulous penitents a general confession is out of the question. It is absolutely forbidden. This is the simple solution of all the doubts and fears that torment such souls. If a confessor ever tells a man or woman or child not to attempt to make a general confession, happiness and peace of mind are to be found only in strict obedience to his command.

Scrupulous people are to be pitied. In their confused mental state they consider God some kind of merciless tyrant. They must be made to realize that as long as they have a good will and make an ordinary effort to tell their sins, God will forgive them. A little consideration of the mercy and goodness of God would do them more good than all the agony of worry which they allow themselves to adopt.

Confession is indeed a penance. We call it the sacrament of penance. But God never intended it to be a torture. These words cannot be repeated too often: "If a confessor told you not ever to attempt to make a general confession, you will find the contentment you desire in strict and

inviolable obedience to his command."

There is another class of penitents to whom a general confession is no more than a special act of devotion. Their motive in recounting all the sins of their past life is merely to humble themselves before God and to renew their sorrow. Young people who are preparing to enter marriage, or who are starting out on the road to the religious life, or who are about to take a long and perhaps hazardous journey find comforting satisfaction in a review of their past life in confession. There is nothing to be said against this practice. Likewise many devout souls adopt the custom of making such a review each year; here again their motive is commendable. But scrupulous souls may not indulge in this privilege.

ALL Catholics ought to cultivate the practice of saying to the confessor at the end of their confessions: "For these and all the sins of my past life, especially (and here they mention one of their sins) I am heartily sorry and I beg absolution

of you, Father." I think it is sufficient, in this practice, for the matter of confession to mention merely the commandment against which one sinned rather than give any detailed account of the sin, for example, to say: "Especially my sins against the sixth commandment."

General confession can mean the salvation of a soul. Those who need it will find that God is always ready to furnish them the grace to enable them to do it right. Fear and shame are feelings which the devil will use to try to discourage them.

The story is told in the life of a saintly priest that he was permitted by God to see the devil moving among the line of penitents waiting to go to confession. The priest said to the devil, "What are you doing here?" His answer was: "When I tempted some of these souls I took shame out of their hearts. That made them sin more easily. Now that they want to return to God, I am putting shame back into their hearts to prevent them from making a good confession."

MEASURE YOUR LOVE

How much do you love God? How much will you suffer for God? Why not begin with the little things? Even if it is only a stabbing word, a teasing remark, a slamming door, a barking dog, a stumble in the dark? And even though these crosses weigh no more than two crossed toothpicks, they will add up and really teach you how to carry a big cross. And one day, when you are in church, you will look up at the fifth station in the way of the cross and you'll see yourself up there, rubbing shoulders with Simon of Cyrene ready to carry the cross, and you will hear Simon say understandingly, "Well, it certainly took a long time for you to show up. Now come on, let's go."

readers retort



In which readers are invited to express their minds on articles and opinions published in The Liguorian. Letters must be signed and full address of the writer must be given, though city and name will be withheld from publication on request.

Anonymous Letters

- Sometimes people write to us asking for advice on a marriage case or about some intimate personal problem, without signing their name or giving their address, but asking us to publish the answer to their particular problem or to write an article about it in the LIGUORIAN. We cannot promise to give personally directed answers to such questions or problems in our printed pages. Prudence must guide us in what we publish, together with the intent of helping many persons at the same time. If, however, any reader writes to ask for a solution to a personal moral problem, we shall write a personal letter in reply, provided the person gives his name and address.

Back and Forth

Please discontinue our subscription to the LIGUORIAN. We have received our first copy and we must say it is not what we expected. While it has a lot of fine information, etc., we had anticipated a few instructive little stories and perhaps a little humor along with it.

Eau Claire, Wis.

G. B.

Congratulations on your wonderful magazine! I just can't say enough wonderful things about it or praise it enough. In the last issue every article

just seemed to hit home. Having just recently been married, my husband and I are finding it difficult to adjust to one another's habits, likes and dislikes, and so we appreciate any advice and help on the "little things."

We have just finished reading our first copy of the LIGUORIAN and were quite disappointed. Presently we receive the SIGN magazine and OUR SUNDAY VISITOR and find them far superior to your magazine. Please cancel our subscription. Enclosed is one dollar to cover cost you may have incurred as the result of our change of mind.

Illinois

L. B. L.

The LIGUorian is one magazine which I always read from front to back. We also take several other religious publications. All of them carry articles and replies to letters giving people advice about their problems and worries. Usually this advice consists in urging the writers to pray and attend Mass and to receive the sacraments frequently. Of course this is wonderful advice, but a person who is unable to leave a sickbed can't attend Mass, and there are other things which may prevent a person from following this advice except the point about prayer.

It has always been surprising to me that religious writers never advise reading the Bible. If people would get the habit of reading the Bible in addition to their other devotions, they would find another source of gaining emotional security, guidance and comfort for which they are continually searching.

Springfield, Mo. Mrs. R. W.

I want to tell you how much I have enjoyed reading the *LIGUORIAN* which I received as a Christmas gift two years ago. At first I wasn't too interested in it and I must confess that my mother got the most enjoyment out of it. She would read the magazine from cover to cover. I didn't realize that it contained such good information and that it offered such a wonderful philosophy for living.

Los Angeles, Calif. J. C.

I really don't have the money to keep getting this *LIGUORIAN* but it is impossible to get along without it; so here is my remittance for a renewal of my subscription. The *LIGUORIAN* has helped us to decide problems the right way so many times — and it made us feel good about it too!

Iowa Mrs. D. G.

Matter of Spelling

In the September *LIGUORIAN* your article entitled "Pioneering against the Evils of Drink," refers to Father Theobald Mathew and his work against the evils of drink in Ireland, 1790-1856. I call attention to the spelling of his name. You have it "Matthew." I have seen it elsewhere as "Mathew." Which is correct?

Minnesota J. M. L.

- "Mathew" is correct, and we were wrong.

The editors

For the Record

It is no surprise to me to notice that in Readers Retort in your September issue you make reference to "the better class of realtor." This is an erroneous statement which is common. The term "realtor" is a copyrighted designation used only by a member of the National Association of Real Estate Boards — usually through his local chapter. Every real estate man is NOT a realtor. A realtor is interested in ethical business procedures.

Minneapolis, Minn. A. D. L.

Listening with One Ear

My only comment on your feature letter, "Working for a Halo," in your September issue is AMEN! So many good Catholics believe it is their right and privilege to criticize everything the priests and sisters do, and it is carried on almost like a family habit by the children, which makes it all the harder for the nuns with their classes of 50-60-70 children to maintain discipline and for the priests to teach and have the respect of these same children. One priest in particular (in my opinion) has been doing a wonderful job of teaching the meaning of the Mass. He has really brought it to life. He has done the same with the meaning of Advent and Christmas. And yet—criticism on all sides! And most of it because people only half listen to what he has to say, then fill in the rest with their own ideas. Yet he keeps on trying — and there are so many like him. My stock answer to such criticism now is, "Would you trade places?" On some occasions, I (no halo!) have gotten into some pretty hot and heavy ar-

guments on this score, but maybe I'm Odd Ball number two.

More Company!

Reading the letter in which the writer refers to himself as being an odd ball made me feel that he had company in myself, as I certainly cannot go along with a lot of present-day thinking on a lot of topics in general. Some months ago I broke the ice, so to speak, in writing to you, when I suggested that it was high time some Catholic publication do something about the mode of present-day dress, especially that of the feminine portion of so-called civilized people. I am most happy to see the article in this month's *LIGUORIAN* on this subject. No doubt the idea of the article was in the working long before my letter to you arrived, because to keep a magazine going the topics and articles must be thought up and written and possibly re-written many months before they get to the readers. Once in a while I wonder, knowing a little of the underhand methods of Communism, if maybe some of their ideas could not possibly be at the bottom of the near nudity of public dress today, as being just another way of breaking down the moral structure of the human race as a whole. When the moral structure of the human race is shot to pieces so to speak, it takes very little time for most of the remaining Christian ideas to break down. It happened in ancient times, and to my mind we are on a fast toboggan ride in that direction today.

Calif. G. E. C.

Refusing Charity

I read with great interest your recent article on disdain of charity. You

explained very thoroughly two reasons why some people refuse charity. May I add a third reason? We have, I imagine, a certain percentage of people who call themselves good, practical Catholics, but who should take a little inventory of themselves. They are the Catholics who look down with a superior air on the people who must accept charity. And that is the third reason I want to mention: some poor people refuse charity because they know from experience that they will be laughed at and ridiculed because they must accept charity. This happens most often when there is a need of children having to accept and wear the cast-off clothing of others. I have seen these children pushed around by other children and grown-ups alike. I have seen children, when this happened, almost crawl into a corner like a whipped pup, with tears in their eyes, afraid to raise their heads. Some of these children were emotional wrecks by the time they were out of grade school. Our Catholic religion surely doesn't advocate this or excuse it, but some Catholics are poor representatives of the Church. Don't you think this sort of thing begins at home? If parents would admonish their children against this sort of ridicule, how much happier many a child would be and show itself truly grateful for any Christian charity. So don't condemn some people for not accepting charity. They have learned by experience that accepting charity means grief and heartbreak. Can you blame them for not accepting it?

Girls' Dress

The article on what boys think of girls' dress was wonderful. I have daughters aged 13 and 11, who yearn to wear shorts and short shorts all the time. For the past two years I have

cut down on the number in their wardrobe and the times when they may be worn. Not at all on Sunday, and never into town! Now they each have only one pair, much to their disgust. The 11-year-old read the part about shorts and it has been on her mind because she has commented on it several times. A seed has been sown!

Wayne, Mich.

Mrs. B. P.

•

"What Boys Think of Girls' Dress" was a very fine article, and I agree that girls should keep covered. However, I do not believe this would solve all the problems. Furthermore, I am tired of having the girls get all the blame. I have gone out with quite a few boys, and I had trouble with them only according to the amount of principle and respect for girls which the fellow had, regardless of how many clothes I had on. So why not preach to the boys on principles, respect for girls and the like? Some have it; why not others? All my years I have heard the girls get the blame — never the boys. Of course, Adam blamed Eve and men have been blaming women ever since, but whom did God talk to after their fall? Adam, wasn't it? Then, too, how about the boys in tight jeans and swim suits — and bare chests? Let's get the boys covered too. They do bother the girls, you know. Why don't you stop excusing the men? It's the old excuse, "That's the way men are made." I've got news for you — girls were made that way, too, but are willing to take their own blame. If you would stop blaming the girls, the boys might start to blame themselves and do something about it.

Lansing, Mich. Mrs. D. J. H.

•

I have just finished reading your article on girls' dress. This article is

years overdue and should be published in every parish church and school. However, I have long wished to see the boys taken to task as well about their manner of dressing. At the public pools and beaches, so many young fellows appear in scanty, skin-tight briefs that look like the lower half of a bikini. And please, please, PLEASE — mention those dungarees that are worn so low on the body that you dread to see a boy reach for anything while he's standing up, for fear the garment will slip down that remaining precarious inch. Maybe the boys think they're showing their masculinity, but to the female mind such garments are disgusting.

Cincinnati, Ohio Mrs. R. V. E.

•

Thanks for the article — that tremendous article about what boys think of girls' dress. Now I know what boys really think, and believe me, I will change my wardrobe. I just hope that a lot of other girls read this article and are benefitting by it.

South Bend, Ind.

C. K.

•

Your article on girls' dress was certainly presented excellently. Even though I am a member of the fair sex, I do agree that the women of today slightly "underdo" their job of dressing. Strange, isn't it how a woman can spend hours getting ready for a date and, when she is ready, she still isn't "dressed?" Of course, the boys could benefit also by means of some constructive criticism. Their dress seems to fall into two categories: blue jeans and swim suits, or if you prefer, lack of material in blue jeans and in swim suits. I am sure I am not the only girl (I am 24) who has looked at a fellow on the beach and wondered why he didn't get a suit that

fit him, or wondered if this guy was sprayed into the jeans he had on or if he was born in them. Take a poll of the girls or women. I am sure you could get enough to agree with me to make it into a good article. After all, we're human too.

Penna.

M. L. B.

The way some boys walk around with their pants falling below their hips, their hair hanging down to their noses, and open shirts exposing their (manly?) hairy chests down to their waistline is not only downright sexy and sloppy, but greasy-looking and disgusting to say the least. I have read several articles on how girls should dress and what a great temptation they cause to boys. I wonder if boys ever stop to think what temptations they can be to girls. After all, we gals are not immune.

Wisconsin

D. C. Z.

Three out of four boys who have received a Catholic education go out with not just a few girls, but with a good number. Each one they take out is expected to neck with them. If the poor girl doesn't belong to the necking squad she soon sits at home with her book or watching TV, and wonders why nobody asks her for a date. The men are supposed to take the lead in everything; nevertheless they depend on the weaker sex to keep them from going wrong. They concentrate on the very thing which is a girl's weakness — necking — to try to lead her to do wrong. A man is too easily excused by society's attitude that the man is weak and girls should lead them along the straight and narrow. Can't you priests preach more to men about trying to please God by leading

good, clean lives? Men have been definitely sold the idea (and they have bought it not unwillingly!) that they just can't do without passionate pleasures, with the result that they don't even try to be good. I am a married woman in my late forties, and I'll go on record as saying that it is the fault of the men that women (some of them) dress the way they do. A good number of them (many of them) just don't seem to want women to be pure and clean.

N. N.

Anon.

It wasn't the girls who put Marilyn Monroe where she is today! It was the boys and men who want that stuff. Unfortunately there are a great many imitators of her. But remember that the girls think it is the easiest and best way to gain male admiration.

New York

Mrs. E. S.

We have lived in two different suburban areas, and believe me, some of the outfits displayed by many of our female neighbors do not leave much to the imagination. Unfortunately the majority of these young women seem to feel that there is nothing immodest or immoral in their dressing (?) in this manner "around home!" Perhaps it would be interesting to read the reactions of mailmen, milkmen, repair and delivery service men who must enter the average neighborhoods and sometimes the homes of these scantily clad women. Also, what sort of influence do these women have on the teen-agers living in their communities? It is to be regretted that the worst offenders along these lines in our particular block are our Catholic wives and mothers. Much as Father may say from the pulpit on Sunday mornings on this subject, by Sunday afternoon the bathing suits,

halters and short shorts are in evidence throughout the neighborhood.

Monroe, Mich.

Mrs. L. C. R.

Choosing One's Cross

The article on the RH factor in the *LIGUORIAN* seemed too pessimistic to me. It made too little allowance for God's mercy and the advances of medical science. After we had three very healthy children, our fourth had to have a complete blood transfer and monthly check up. Thirteen months later our fifth child was born, perfectly healthy. But there is always the possibility that RH will affect our future children. This does not frighten us. Doctors already know so much about this condition that almost always they can save the child affected. Having this problem has made better people of myself and my husband. We have found kindness and sympathy in others, have become closer to each other, and above all closer to God. I doubt if I would choose "to throw my cross on the pile" and pick a different one.

Michigan

Mrs. R. L.

In the August *LIGUORIAN* you had an article that dealt with RH factors. I have this blood condition. I am RH negative, and my husband is RH positive. We have, by the grace of God, nine children, five sons and four daughters. We have been told that this is most unusual, because none of the children ever needed a blood transfusion at birth. All are normal, active, intelligent. This should give hope to many who are overworried about this RH business. Each time I found I was pregnant, I went to our parish priest and received the special blessing for expectant mothers. Then I offered my pregnancy to Our Lady of Fatima, and

recited a special prayer to her every day. All through each pregnancy the anti-bodies which cause the trouble were very high. But in each case, about two weeks before delivery, the blood tests came back marked "no antibodies." Our oldest son is now studying for the priesthood.

Illinois

Mrs. E. F. N.

• *We publish this because we receive so many letters from mothers who are inordinately frightened over the RH factor as found in their blood. The above is only one letter of many from mothers who through prayer and the services of good obstetricians had little trouble with their children.*

The editors

Kind Words

May I take this time to tell your editors how much I enjoy your publication? It is a bright day in life when the mailman drops it off at our home.

Michigan

Mrs. C. N.

• And how we enjoy your magazine! Married ten years and parents of six healthy, growing children, you know we need all the guidance and encouragement we can get to keep on the straight and narrow — and to guide our children on it too.

Oil City, Pa.

Mrs. R. G.

• I first subscribed to your magazine several years ago because one of your priests visited my parish church, and I felt it my "duty" to subscribe to a Catholic magazine. It is such an up-to-date and interesting periodical that now I renew every year because I look forward to it every month.

Springfield, Mo.

Mrs. V. J. S.

Weekday Virtues

Cheerfulness

J. FITZPATRICK, C.SS.R.

CHEERFULNESS is not the easiest of virtues, and in the early morning its practice can require positive heroism. But where it is present in its genuine form, the difficulties of life become much easier to bear.

The root word from which *cheerfulness* comes is, of course, *cheer*, but usage has brought about noticeable differences of meaning between the two. Indeed certain usages of the word *cheer* have an aura of the disreputable.

Innocent enough, of course, is the word when it is used to denote an ear-shattering rallying cry emitted by 1000 high school or college students at a football game, and led, to the rhythm of frantic acrobatics, by one or more youthful extroverts known as *cheerleaders*.

A cheer can also be construed as an act of homage. Let someone in a group shout, "Three cheers for our president!" — and (as the older writers were accustomed to spell it out) "Hip, hip, hooray!" would rise to the rafters.

A little less innocent is the use of the word when it is used to denote that which has brought about a certain fuzziness of the faculties and a misnamed physical glow. We mean of course any beverage which is essentially alcoholic. Thus it is said of one who is wobbly at Christmas that he has "partaken too freely of holiday cheer." Alas, such artificially stimulated good feeling is only too often succeeded by the morose gloominess of a hangover.

The term *cheerfulness* is ordinarily not used in any such rowdy connotation. People use it to betoken a certain lightness of touch; a genial and lively attitude toward life; a smiling, buoyant and gay disposition. Cheerfulness in this sense is an asset which anyone should be proud to possess. Its presence or absence in a family can mark the difference between peace and discord.

Cheerfulness is far from the most important virtue in the roster, but it is a good virtue to have around for the wear and tear of daily life. The

Scriptures speak highly of it. St. Paul extolled it in writing to the people of Corinth, urging them to be generous in a collection he was taking up for the poor. Do not give "grudgingly, or from compulsion," he wrote them, for "God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7) And in his letter to the Romans, he urged them to "show mercy, with cheerfulness."

St. James wrote in his letter: "Is any one of you sad? Let him pray. Is any one cheerful? Let him sing a hymn." (James 5:13) This is not to be taken as a command; cheerfulness and a pleasing and well-tuned voice do not necessarily go together, and genuine cheerfulness prefers to be quiet when others might be annoyed. But it is clear what the apostle had in mind. He wanted his hearers to lift up their hearts, and to encourage the spirit of cheerfulness in their souls.

In the first Book of Machabees one finds an interesting phrase. It is said that in troubled and difficult times, "Judas Machabeus and his brethren fought with cheerfulness the battle of Israel." This reveals much of the kind of men they were. Cheerfulness will not win battles, it is true; but it makes it easier for men to live together when they have some great task in hand, and perhaps its contribution to the final success is not small.

Cheerfulness, of course, is shallow and false if it does not take into account the essential seriousness of life. A completely witless person may give an impression of cheerfulness,

but this is no virtue, since there is no responsibility. Cheerfulness without depth is like a mask that can be put on and taken off at will. Forced geniality and empty exuberance can grate mightily on those who must live with them. But when a person bears his cross, fully aware of his suffering, and fully sympathetic to the sufferings of others, and yet reveals the depths of his spirit in a gentle gaiety and smiling lightheartedness, he truly reveals himself to be a great man, and one who is close to God.

QUESTIONS

SOMETIMES it is easier to be cheerful outside the home than in it. Do you make a special effort to be happy and pleasant with your family and in your own home?

Are you cheerful in your place of work, or have you developed a certain gruffness and gloominess that repels all around you?

Are you cheerfully kind toward those under your authority, or do you widen the gulf by assuming a chilly attitude of conscious superiority?

How about the times of special difficulty for this virtue? Foremost in these times for most people is the early morning. Few feel very gay at this time, but do you at least make the effort to overcome the natural man and be pleasant to those around you?

Are you cheerful at the time of special crosses — sickness, business failure, etc.? No one expects you to be bouncily gay at such times, but

do you go to the other extreme and make things miserable for those around you by becoming a cranky bear?

Are you cheerful in your prayers and in the fulfillment of your duties as a Catholic? Christ once said: "When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites." (Matthew 6:16) What He meant surely was that He wants our service of God to be joy-

ful and lighthearted, since He promises so great a reward for so little sacrifice.

Are you cheerful even at the thought of death itself? A fear of death is natural enough, but with that fear for the true Christian should go a calm, joyous confidence in God and full acceptance of His will. This is above all the cheerful giving that God loves.

SAVE A SOUL!

If you ever save somebody's life at the risk of your own, you may have a medal pinned on you by some organization or other to reward you for your efforts. People may talk about you with praise and admiration; the papers may carry the story in words and pictures; you may get into the newsreels or be asked for a testimonial for a breakfast food. But if you should ever help to save somebody's immortal soul, for example, by calling a priest to help a dying sinner make his peace with God, you would never expect any individual or organization to hang a medal on you.

Why?

It could be because people look upon the saving of a soul as something that can never be fittingly rewarded here on earth neither by the presentation of a medal nor by the bestowal of a fortune. But I do not think that is the reason. Again, it could be because people are more interested in bodily life than in the soul; more impressed by the saving of a life than by the saving of a soul. They forget that when you help to save a man's soul you save his life for all eternity.

WHO HAS SINNED?

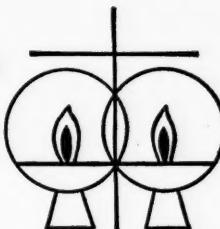
There are some people who seem to think that sickness or disability must always be explained as a punishment for sin. People in the time of Christ were quite convinced of this, and He took pains to set them straight. In St. John's Gospel, chapter nine, it is related that our Lord one day met a man along the road who had been blind from birth.

"Rabbi," His disciples asked Him, "who has sinned? This man or his parents?"

But Christ answered, "Neither this man sinned, nor his parents, but the works of God were to be made manifest in him."

FOR WIVES AND HUSBANDS ONLY

Prudence vs. Trust in God



PROBLEM: The letter from the husband whose wife had seven children in eleven years (March, p. 30) despite dangers to her health did not sicken me (as it did your August correspondent) but it rather puzzled me. What about God helping those who help themselves? Isn't this mother sinning in having child after child and thereby impairing her health? Isn't she morally bound to preserve her own life? What about the parents' moral obligation to care for their children's physical, spiritual and material welfare? Who would care for these children if they were left motherless? What of the insecurity of the children, when their mother is so often ill? If a doctor told me that having another child would endanger my health, my husband and I would feel criminal if we did not abstain or practice rhythm. It is fine to love God and trust in Him, but must we not also work and plan a little? I, in this woman's position, would feel it my duty to take care of my living children. I realize that she and her husband must feel very close to God; certainly they have a beautiful faith. But I do not think that her course is the one to be followed by us all.

SOLUTION: This problem of prudence vs. trust in God in the matter of having children or avoiding having children (by abstinence or rhythm)

Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

keeps recurring again and again in our correspondence. It is not easy to phrase the general principles involved in such a way or adequately to solve every individual's problem, because each case must be decided against the background of the special circumstances that surround it. In each case, therefore, personal guidance should be sought from a wise spiritual director or confessor.

Here, however, are some of the general norms that must be considered in this matter.

It is certain that God expects human beings to use the intelligence He gave them in ordering their lives toward their final destiny in heaven. This is the meaning of the virtue of prudence. One of the obligations of prudence is that of preserving one's life by all necessary and moral means. Note that we say *moral* means. One would have to lay down his life as a martyr rather than publicly deny God or the true religion. Thus martyrdom would be the height of prudence.

In the case of a wife who has been told by unimpeachable medical authority that pregnancy will kill her, prudence would demand of both husband and wife that they use the necessary and moral means of abstaining from

their marriage rights or practicing rhythm.

It is rare that such a prospect can be laid before a husband and wife with certainty. Even, however, when it is set down as exceedingly probable that pregnancy will endanger life, prudence would suggest the use of moral means to avoid it. Pope Pius XII clearly stated this in his instruction to midwives in 1951.

Beneath the level of "exceedingly probable" danger, there are countless degrees of merely probable danger that can be suggested by doctors. Prudence does not demand that every merely probable danger be avoided by extreme measures, especially when this would involve departure from a normal way of living. There is probable danger to life in merely driving a car, because over 40,000 persons die in traffic accidents every year and over 100,000 are injured. Prudence requires special caution, not giving up driving.

So with mothers who are told there is probable danger in their having another child. It is quite the fashion, in some medical circles, to stress such

probable dangers to the extent that inordinate fears are created. That is a product of secularism, which has also invented birth-prevention as an answer to even the least probable fears.

In the face of the exaggerated worldly prudence that governs the thinking of many people today, it is not contrary to supernatural prudence for a husband and wife to live a normal married life even in the presence of some vaguely or generally suggested probable danger to the wife's health. That is exactly where trust in God comes in. Prudence may suggest spacing children by two or three years, and if the danger at a certain time becomes more evident and probable, even longer. Experience proves (and if we had them, the statistics would demonstrate) that in a vast majority of cases the trust in God is repaid by unexpected health and ease in childbearing. We repeat, however, that wise spiritual guidance should be sought in each doubtful case. It is an essential part of the virtue of prudence to seek counsel when in doubt about one's duty.

SETTING-UP EXERCISE

One	. . .	A little patience at least once
Two	. . .	A minute of unselfishness
Three	. . .	A kind word . . . or two or three
Four	. . .	A bit of self-control
Five	. . .	A flash of generosity
Six	. . .	A prompt excuse for . . . someone else
Seven	. . .	A noble thought . . . for someone else . . .
Eight	. . .	A good deed . . . not left undone
Nine	. . .	A brief prayer . . . for a friend in trouble
Ten	. . .	A moment of thankfulness . . . for blessings enjoyed
Eleven	. . .	A kindly smile . . . where it may brighten another
Twelve	. . .	A snatch of song . . . or hum of a tune

The Field at Home

JOHN E. DOHERTY, C.SS.R.

When Will the Jews

The nation of Israel that rejected Christ is destined, in Catholic opinion, to turn to Him at the last and embrace Him as its Saviour.

Return to Christ?

THE Jewish nation's rejection of Jesus Christ, Who brought to the lowliest of His people the hope of eternal union with God and Whose teaching is the key to the understanding of all Jewish history, seems at present to be an unrelieved tragedy. Yet Catholics hold the opinion that this is a temporary blindness only, to continue until the Gospel is preached among all nations. Then the ancient people of God will all be Christians. Besides, a small segment of the Jewish nation followed Christ from the beginning and stayed with Him; and it was upon this group that He built His Church. Those who accepted Jesus as the longed-for Messiah or Saviour are regarded as fulfilling the spiritual destiny of Israel

in the Church of Christ today by continuing the testimony of the prophets concerning Him.

The most illustrious of Jewish converts, after the original apostles, was Saint Paul, who wrote in the New Testament that God had given him the privilege of making known among the other nations of the world "this mystery of the unfathomable riches of Christ, of publishing to the world the plan of this mystery hidden from the beginning of time in the all-creating mind of God."

Not only Saint Paul but all members of the Catholic Church today believe that they have the privilege of publishing this mystery. Yet in the Old Testament it was the nation of Israel that first announced the plan

of the mystery by foretelling through its prophets the way of salvation that would be revealed in Christ. For this purpose, among the Jews, the prophet of prophets was Isaias.

THE CALL OF ISAIAS

GOD called Isaias when he was at prayer in the temple of Jerusalem. Snatched into an ecstasy, the prophet had a vision of God, concealed only by angels. The description of this mystical experience is one of the most sublime passages of the Old Testament. It reveals an intuition of the ineffable holiness of God. It filled the prophet with a sense of his own guilt and that of his people, and threatened to overwhelm him with despair; but God sent an angel to touch his lips with a burning coal as a symbolic gesture that the prophet's guilt had been removed.

Then the Lord sent Isaias to bring a message to Israel, to teach the way of salvation to a people who would prove unwilling to understand his teaching. Wrapped in warnings to trust in God alone and in prophetic threats of the exile they must undergo when they did not, the message of Isaias was a promise of the hope and consolation that Christ would bring them at last.

God had permitted the Assyrians to swallow up ten of the tribes of Israel as a punishment for their infidelity and cult of idols. Until now He had spared the southern kingdom of Juda because its kings had destroyed the temples of Baal; yet idolatry was now spreading in Juda, and the time of its visitation was also at

hand. In somber and severe tones the prophet foretold the exile of the Jews in Babylon. Still there is a basic note of tenderness and consolation running through all of his prophecies. "Be comforted, be comforted, my people," was the refrain he repeated. This comfort Christ would bring.

COUNSELLOR TO KINGS

THE Lord God ruled His kingdom through anointed kings, and therefore He sent Isaias to be the prophet and counsellor to five kings of Juda. Isaias taught the people by addressing these kings and he counselled them not to rely on human wisdom or foreign entanglements to defeat their enemies, but to put their trust entirely in God, Whose arm was not shortened, nor His power to save His people.

When the mighty empires of Assyria and Egypt for a time threatened to swallow up the tiny kingdom of Juda, the Jewish kings were tempted to play off one power against the other; but the prophet warned them: "Come back and keep still and all shall be well with you; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

Isaias was able to give signs of God's care for His people. Once, when Sennacherib, ruler of Assyria, came to the gates of Jerusalem, Isaias foretold that not even an arrow would fall in the city. True to his prophecy, an angel came and repulsed the invaders before the city gates, and they retreated, leaving Jerusalem unmolested. Yet most often the kings were deaf to the prophet's words, and Isaias could predict only disaster

to the Jews. Nevertheless his prophecies rang out with affirmations of confidence and ultimate hope in Christ.

Isaias never lost hope for his people, despite their blindness and rejection of him. He was persecuted and put to death; yet, as long as he lived, he never ceased to teach that God would seek out the faithful remnant of Juda who put their trust completely in Him and that they would have their hopes fulfilled in Christ. As for the rest of the nation of Israel, He foretold that it would wander in darkness, losing its way, seeking salvation without understanding its prophets, until it learned to abandon itself to God in a spirit of humility and perfect faith; then it, too, would find its Saviour. Then he promised: "No furrowed cheek but the Lord will wipe away its tears; gone the contempt endured in the whole world's eyes. The Lord has promised it."

* * *

FROM the day of Pentecost onward the Church of Christ grew like a sprout out of Jerusalem. The first members of the Church were convert Jews; they were the ones whose trust in God was complete, their hearts pure. They were the faithful seed of Israel.

What of the rest of Israel — the unconverted? These also have served God's purposes through the centuries, for as hostile witnesses they have kept and venerated the prophets who foretold the darkness that would come upon them when they rejected Christ, but who also predict-

ed the consolation and joy that they would have one day with all the other nations of the world, when they find Christ again.

Such is also the prophecy of the great apostle of Christ, Saint Paul.

"I must not fail to make this revelation known to you," Paul writes to us, "or else you might have too great a conceit of yourselves. Blindness has fallen upon a part of Israel, but only until the tale of the Gentile nations is complete; then the whole of Israel will find salvation, as we read in Scripture: 'A deliverer will come from Sion, to rid Jacob of his unfaithfulness: and this shall be the fulfillment of my covenant with him, when I take away their sins.'"

The prophecy that Saint Paul quotes is also from the prophet Isaias. Isaias, himself, then goes on to make known this promise of God to Israel: "On thy lips shall I dwell, on the lips of thy children and thy children's children, henceforth and forever."

When the Jews return to Christ in His Church, then in all clarity the prophecy of Isaias will appear fulfilled, but the Israel that fulfills it will then be recognized as the Church into which all nations have entered to be taught the ways of Christ. Then the Jews will show to the world that God does not repent of His promises. Then they, too, will sing of God's mercy in the words of the great daughter of Sion — Mary, the mother of Christ: "He has protected His servant Israel, keeping His merciful design in remembrance, according to the promise He made to our forefathers, Abraham and his posterity for evermore."

Christmas

on the

Pacific

Not all the people in the world have

heard the message of Christmas—

and much less its explanation.

Christmas Eve in mid-Pacific!

FATHER Casey could read in the faces of his fellow travelers that he was not alone in feeling little stirrings of homesickness tugging at his heart. The captain of the ship had done what he could; the good ship was decked out like a flower garden; the orchestra was offering its choicest selections; the chefs, the dining room stewards and the wine stewards had done their gracious best. Wining, dining and dancing — with music — was the note of the evening. But it still was Christmas-Eve-away-from-home.

The priest drifted away from the noisy crowd to take a few turns on the upper deck, where the soft, sooth-

ing breeze was a trifle fresher, and to dream in the moonlight of the crunching snow and the frost-sharpened air of childhood's Christmases.

A silent, motionless figure stood at the rail.

"Ah!" said Father Casey to himself. "Our Japanese friend, Mr. Matoyō."

"Good evening, Reverend! May I join you?"

The correctness of his speech showed that he had studied his English with Japanese industry and thoroughness; the strong foreign accent would be modified with practice. He addressed the priest as "Reverend" because some of the ship's officers and many of the passengers did so,

which he judged to be the proper form.

"Everybody is gay tonight," Mr. Matoyo said. "But in the West Christmas is also a religious feast, is it not?"

Father Casey winced inwardly at the word, *also*. He had to admit to himself, however, that a pagan, such as this man seemed to be, could easily be led to the conclusion that the religious element (if any) in the celebration of Christmas was very secondary indeed.

"Christmas," said Father Casey, "is, or at least should be, *principally* a religious feast. In fact, in the beginning it was exclusively a religious feast."

"It has been changed?"

"The feast has not been changed, but the religious spirit of many who celebrate it has been changed. As I said, in the beginning it was exclusively a religious feast, but the religious event it commemorated was of such transcendent beauty and meaning that it filled every Christian heart with joy. This joy they shared with another in happy reunions of families and friends, in feasting and gift-giving. Little by little the religious spirit grew cold and these manifestations of Christmas joy began to obscure the sublime event that was their cause."

"And what, Reverend, was this so important event?"

"Have you no idea at all of the meaning of Christmas?" the priest asked.

"None whatever. These decorations on the ship, I am told, have

reference to the Christmas feast. I have been examining them, and I find them quite confusing. I see camels crossing a desert, reindeer drawing a sleigh through deep snow over the housetops, shooting stars, sheep on a mountain, winged spirits, young men and women embracing each other as they skate on ice, a little peasant family in a stable with the animals. It seems impossible that such diverse manifestations should commemorate one and the same event."

FATHER Casey realized that he was speaking with a man who knew nothing of Christianity, but who, in his eagerness for information of all kinds, was ready to lend a willing ear to an exposition of its beliefs in the same spirit with which he would listen to an explanation of bridge, labor unions, log-rolling or any of the other peculiar institutions of the West.

"If," reflected the priest, "he listens to all the different descriptions of Christianity he can get on this ship, he will be more confused about Christianity than he is already about Christmas. Well, I have the first try at it. I'll give him the true doctrine about the fundamental principles of Christianity before the rest of the passengers begin regaling him with their pet beliefs."

Then he said, "Christmas is the birthday of Jesus Christ."

"One of your great men, no doubt. General? Statesman? Financier?"

"He was a carpenter."

Mr. Matoyo felt pity for the low condition of the great man of the Christians.

Father Casey continued: "He is the baby you see in that stable with the ox and the ass."

"But He later won glory before His people by his achievements?" the Japanese suggested hopefully, in his haste to get away from this degrading situation.

"Glory before His people! On the contrary, His people had Him executed along with two bandits. It was not their custom to hang criminals but to nail them to a cross — to crucify them. That is why, in Christian churches, you will see the image of Jesus Christ dying on a cross."

Mr. Matoyo gave up. These Christians were hopeless. They made no attempt to save face. Indeed, they recounted these shameful details about their great man as though they were proud of them.

"He could have prevented all this, if He had wished," continued Father Casey, "since He was all-powerful; but He allowed Himself to be crucified in order to make amends for our wicked deeds, to lift us up to be sons of God, princes of heaven, inheritors of eternal, celestial glory. To accomplish this work of love, He was born into our poor world. That is why we are so joyful at His birth. For thousands of years His people had been longing and praying and looking forward to this happy day."

"But this — this peasant, this carpenter was — was hanged, was crucified — and that made you princes of heaven? I do not understand."

"Of course, you would not — without understanding Who Jesus Christ really is."

"Who is He?"

"He is the God-man; He is both God and man. As man, He can represent His fellow men and die as their representative, to make amends for their evil deeds. As God, His amends are of infinite value, sufficient and more than sufficient to atone for their sins and to merit for them the privilege of sharing in His divinity, of being princes of heaven, sons of God."

"Then this Jesus Christ is one of your earth-gods. You Christians have earth-gods and heaven-gods, is it not?"

"Mr. Matoyo, there is but one God, Creator and Ruler of heaven and earth and all things."

"But *He* did not die on a scaffold — on a cross!"

"He loved us. He loved me — and He loved you and all men with such exceeding great love that He died on a cross to save us from the punishment we deserve for our sins and to merit for us the eternal glory of heaven."

"But such a God," the Japanese objected, "could not die. The Creator and Ruler of heaven and earth could not die."

"As God He could not die. But He took a human body and soul like ours that He might be able to die on the cross to save us. Then, by His power as God, He rose from the dead, that we too might one day experience a glorious resurrection."

"He is half God and half man?"

"He is wholly God and wholly man. He has perfect divine nature. Both natures are united in the one person of Jesus Christ."

"But how can that be?" Mr. Matyo asked.

"God existed always. He exists of Himself and depends on nothing outside Himself. He is the cause of everything else; therefore He must have existed always, for there was nothing else to cause Him to begin to exist. If He had not existed always He would never have begun to exist, and therefore nothing would exist. He was always God; but in the beginning He was *only* God. Then at a certain time, which He had set, He joined to Himself a human nature, a human body and soul, and was born of a virgin in a stable in Bethlehem on Christmas night. From that time on He was both God and man."

"I see. You Christians have reason to be happy on Christmas since your God-man was born for you on that day."

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THE man from the Orient could not get away from the disturbing thought that the God of the Christians lost face by His humble origin.

"Truly," he said quietly, "it is to be regretted that He happened to be born in a stable."

"Listen, Mr. Matyo. Because God is all-powerful, because He rules and governs all things, He could have arranged to be born in a palace or mansion, had He wished it. Could He not?"

"Well — yes — if He is all-powerful."

"The great God was born in a stable because He wanted it that way."

"But why?"

"To cure our sick souls. Our soul sickness comes from our foolish hankering after wealth, from our unrestrained appetite for honors and for all the things that satisfy our senses and pamper our bodies. This is stupid, as we realize in our too infrequent moments of straight thinking — stupid because wealth and honors and pleasures of the body cannot make us really happy. More than that, it is harmful because it makes us lie and cheat and destroy our neighbor's reputation and fight and steal and degrade ourselves and others in our unrestrained searching and hunting for money and honors and pleasure. God had often taught us through the common sense He gave us and through the teaching of the wise men He sent us to avoid this stupid and harmful mistake. We would not listen. Therefore He came Himself to teach us this lesson by His own example. When we see our God deliberately choosing to be born in such poverty, we begin to understand that money and all the splendid things of the world cannot be so important as the world makes them out to be; when we see Him so despised and forgotten, we begin to learn that honors are of little lasting and real value; when we see Him suffering from the first moment of His earthly life, we begin to realize that self-indulgence is neither noble nor beneficial, and that suffering must have some purpose."

"A wise and efficient way of teaching a difficult lesson," the Japanese admitted.

"THE Man-God lying there in the manger teaches us another lesson which is still more important," continued Father Casey.

"What is that?"

"The lesson of love. Born amid such suffering and humiliations, He shows us how much He loves us. If we would see him in a luxurious room surrounded by servants and attendants, we might not realize how much He loved us; but seeing Him born for our sake in an animal's stall, we cannot doubt it. Many men would have been afraid to come near Him if He had been born in the midst of wealth and luxury."

"The God of the West is good!"

"The God of the West is also the God of the East. He is your God as well as mine, even though you do not know Him. He rules and governs both of us — He keeps both of us alive. As God He sees all things past, all things in the present and in the future. Lying there in the straw of Bethlehem on the first Christmas night He sees and loves every man, woman and child of Japan as well as of Europe and America. He is inviting all to stop wearing themselves out in the unending race for wealth, honors and pleasure — inviting them to come to Him and find true happiness in loving and serving their God and enjoying His love."

"When He was born among His chosen people, the Jews," said Father Casey after a moment of silence between the two men, "they rejected Him. One of our sacred books tells us that when He came to His own, His own received Him not. And so

He rejected them and brought His treasures and blessings to the Gentiles — to all the other people of the world. If Europe and America continue to ignore Him and to do such things as making His birthday an occasion for wild and even sinful celebrations, He may leave them, too, and seek refuge among the Orientals. One thing is certain: He will not be content until midnight Christmas bells ring out in every Japanese village, and the crib of Bethlehem is set up in every Japanese home."

"I thank you for your explanation of Christmas," said Mr. Matoyo sincerely.

With the formal bow and the puzzling smile of the Oriental, Mr. Matoyo walked from the brightness of the moonlit deck into the shadows of the ever-ready lifeboats and left Father Casey alone under the Christmas sky of the mid-Pacific.

FLYING ORDERS

The young husband wrote home from his new job, saying: "Made foreman — feather in my cap." A few weeks later he wrote again, saying: "Made manager — another feather in my cap." Several weeks ensued with no report. Then came a letter: "Fired — send money for train fare."

Unfeelingly, his wife telegraphed back: "Use feathers and fly home."

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PICK AND SHOVEL!

An open mind is fine; only be careful what you shovel into it.

Pipe Dreams



POINTED PARAGRAPHS

Time to Think

One purpose of Advent is to give all of us time to think about the virtues especially taught by Christ through the circumstances of His birth, so that we may celebrate Christmas by bringing to Him the virtues He brings to us in the stable.

The first is the virtue of humility.

Humility fundamentally means the remembrance of our utter dependence on God and the damaging deficit of our sins. Humility inspires the putting aside of all spurious claims to honor, attention, consideration and praise.

Was there ever an example of humility like that of Christ in the stable? He had a right, as God, to honor and praise, but in becoming one of us, He had to appear as helpless as we must remember ourselves to be in the eyes of God. The stable, bleak and cold, the animals, mute and unthinking companions, the lack of all comfort and convenience — all cry out to us: "Remember, you too must be content with little, unconcerned about lack of honor, humbly submissive to all that God wills."

The second virtue is detachment.

Detachment means a happy-go-lucky freedom from worry about the material circumstances of our lives. It means really believing that if we have God in our hearts, it does not

really matter whether we are able to buy our clothes in the most expensive stores or whether we must shop around for them in the bargain basement; whether we can afford to eat in the leading restaurants or whether we are rather steadily held down to a diet of left-overs; whether we have bundles of money in the bank or whether we scarcely ever have folding-money in our pocket.

Was ever detachment more perfect than Christ's? He could have had the best, but He chose the worst of material things, to prove that we too should not be anxious about what we possess and what we are lacking in our lives.

The third virtue is charity, which comes to life in zeal.

Zeal means a constant and burning desire to make others happy and to help them save their souls. At the crib we learn that true charity and zeal begin with stripping ourselves of all that we hold most dear — and when we take inventory of these things, it is strange how, if we are honest, we begin to learn that self-love is our dearest possession.

He Who came to save us all, came with nothing He could call His own. They who have true zeal begin by nudging self-love out of their heart and soul. Too many would make oth-

ers happy and help them save their souls, if only they could do so and yet lose nothing of their own. Saving others means losing oneself with Christ in love for others.

Bring these three virtues to Christ this Christmas. Bring Him humility by learning to say: "Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine." Bring Him detachment by repeating over and over: "O Lord, let me be content, so long as I have Thy love in my heart." Bring Him zeal by saying over and over: "Nothing for myself, Lord. All for Thee, and for the good of souls."

TV in the Service of Truth

Much has been written of late about the overall mediocrity of television fare. There are some indeed who feel that the industry is literally prostituting itself into commercialization. "What will sell soap?" appears to be a much more cogent question than, "How can we present a truly worthwhile and artistic production?"

There is truth in the accusation, even though to generalize is always a dangerous thing. There is much mediocrity — and worse — in television. But an occasional thoughtful and inspiring program does come along, making one realize somewhat wistfully the tremendous potential for achievement which remains unexplored. One can only hope and pray that the industry will develop more along these lines.

Catholics throughout the country have been doing their part — modestly enough, it is true — to utilize this great new instrument in the serv-

ice of their cause. Occasional sermons and special religious programs are to be found in almost every area. There are, of course, varying degrees of artistry in this, but the effort at least is being made.

On the national scene, the Catholic Hour television series, produced by the National Council of Catholic Men over the last year has been outstanding and has won applause on all sides for its polish and distinction.

Word has reached us of a new series of television stories which are available nationally to stations throughout this coming fall and winter. They have been produced by the well-known Hour of St. Francis, which has presented a weekly broadcast on radio over the last fourteen years, and is currently being heard on 650 stations at home and abroad. Radio station managers have long rated this program as one of the very best of its kind. The same talent has brought to maturity the TV venture.

The stories in this new television series, we are told, deal with down-to-earth, everyday problems of life and are not preachy or stuffy. They have a sound moral point, but at the same time are designed as entertainment to capture and hold the interest of viewers.

We feel there are many TV program directors throughout the country who will be glad to schedule a program of this kind. The series of 13 programs will be released gratis to stations requesting them and willing to offer a favorable time segment. Readers of the LIGUORIAN

could perform a useful service by calling the attention of their local TV stations to this new series and requesting that it be made available to the local viewing audience.

Here is the address to which further inquiries may be directed:

The Hour of St. Francis Television Program

218 E. 12th St.
Los Angeles 15, Calif.

Books by the Dozen

Among desirable gifts for Christmas, books surely should not be looked down upon and considered insignificant. It may well be true that, according to the estimate of researchers in this field, only one out of 50 Americans reads more than one book a year. If it is true, it is also to be regretted. If giving a good book or two to relatives or friends will help to make some slight adjustment of those figures, the act will be a distinct service to the Church and to the nation.

The question that arises immediately is: what books should I give?

There are good books and bad ones, and it is certainly no safe procedure to rush into a bookstore two days before Christmas looking for a gift for good old eccentric Uncle Ed who reads books all the time, and picking out a volume from the counter merely because its dust jacket has a clever arrangement of colors.

What is needed here is a little advance planning. What are Uncle Ed's special interests? Where can one find a listing of good books recently published?

For a practical and comprehensive survey of the year's worthwhile books we suggest that readers send for a copy of the Thomas More Catholic Book Annual for 1961, available at the Thomas More Association, 210 W. Madison St., Chicago 6, Ill. Here you will find Msgr. John Kennedy, a leading Catholic reviewer, offering his skilled opinion as to the best books of the year, and a similar discussion of children's books by Ethna Sheehan. Then in the following pages the titles are grouped under various headings such as biography, fiction, lives of the saints, paperbooks, etc. This book annual is put together expertly, and should be a joy to the book lover, and to those (may they be legion!) whom the book lover hopes to inspire to a similar love.

DEAR LITTLE ONE

If true it be,
As oft confessed,
That tiny things
Are loved the best;

That precious things
Most dear to all
In outward form
Are often small,

Then never did
This truth appear
To men on earth
More wondrous clear

Than in that day
Of strange, new joy
When God became
A baby boy.

L. G. Miller, C.S.S.R.

LGUORIANA

The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ



Chapter VIII—Love Is Not Perverse (continued)

By *St. Alphonsus Liguori*
Translated by
C. D. McEnniry, C.S.S.R.

AT THE beginning of this chapter we enumerated five ways or means of overcoming lukewarmness or indifference in our spiritual life and setting out on the road to holiness. We have explained the first of these five points, which is a *desire for holiness*. The second step which we must take in order to advance toward God with fervor and devotion is to make up our minds to do so.

II. The Determination to Succeed
MANY persons, are called to holiness, urged to holiness and desire holiness, but because they never really make up their mind to get down to work to acquire holiness, they live and die in disgusting lukewarmness.

The desire of holiness is not enough without the resolution to follow it. There are many who feed their soul on empty desires, but they never take one step on the road to God! It is of such desires the Scriptures speak: "Desires kill the slothful." (Prov. 21:25) The lazy person is always desiring, but never does he take

the means, proper to his state in life, to become holy. He says: "Oh, if I were in a desert instead of in this house, if I could go and live in a monastery instead of being at home, I would give myself entirely to God."

In the meantime he cannot put up with a neighbor, he cannot bear a word of contradiction, he fills his mind with a thousand useless cares, he commits numberless faults of gluttony, curiosity, pride; and then he sighs to the wind: "Oh, if I could! Oh, if I had! Oh, if this! Oh, if that!"

Such desires do more harm than good, for he is content to feed on them and go on living his lukewarm life. St. Francis de Sales says: "I can never stand to see a person, who already has his duty or his vocation, always hankering after pious practices that are incompatible with his duty or his vocation; he merely dissipates his energies and grows lax in the performance of practices he could and should be attending to."

We should desire holiness and resolutely use the means to acquire it. St. Teresa says: "All God asks of us is a manly resolution, and He will do the rest Himself. Of irresolute souls the devil has no fear."

This is where meditation helps. During meditation we find the means

leading to holiness. There are those who make meditation often, but never arrive at any solid resolution. The same saint says: "I prefer meditation that has been practiced for only a short time rather than meditation through many years wherein the soul never does reach the point of making a resolution to do something worthwhile for God." In another place she says: "I know from experience that if, at the beginning, one resolves to do something solely for God, no matter how difficult it may be, he need not fear failure."

OUR first resolution should be to make every effort, even to accept death, in order not to commit another deliberate sin, no matter how small. It is true that, without divine help, all our efforts will not suffice to overcome temptations, but if we are ready to do, at all times, what lies in our power, God, with His grace, will come to the aid of our weakness and lead us to victory.

This resolution to avoid deliberate sin removes all obstacles from our path and gives us great courage by assuring us that we are in sanctifying grace. St. Francis de Sales writes: "The greatest certitude we can have in this world of being in the grace of God consists, not in any feeling of love, but in the simple and irrevocable abandonment of ourselves into His hands and in the firm resolution never to consent to any sin, whether great or small." This means nothing else than having a delicate conscience. But mark well, it is one thing to have a delicate conscience,

quite another to have a scrupulous conscience. To have a delicate conscience is necessary to attain to holiness, but to have a scrupulous conscience is a fault and does harm. Therefore it is our duty to obey our spiritual father and disregard scruples which are nothing but vain and unreasonable fears.

Therefore we should resolve to choose what is best, not merely what gives pleasure to God, but what gives the *greatest* pleasure to God, without laying down any conditions. St. Francis de Sales says: "We should begin by making a strong and constant resolution to give ourselves entirely to God, protesting that, for the future, we wish to belong to Him without reserve, and then we should keep on frequently renewing this resolution."

St. Andrew of Avellino made a vow to advance every day in holiness. We are not obliged, in order to sanctify ourselves, to make this vow, but we should earnestly strive to advance, every day, a few steps in holiness.

St. Lawrence Justinian writes: "When one is really walking on the road to holiness, he feels an interior eagerness to make progress; and the more he advances, the greater does that eagerness become, because with the daily increasing divine light, he sees his helplessness so clearly that it seems to him he has no virtue and does nothing good, or, if he does discover some good, it seems to him so insignificant that he makes little ac-

count of it; and so he constantly strives really to grow in holiness without ever wearying."

We must do it *now* — not put it off until tomorrow. Who can assure us that we shall have tomorrow? The sacred writer warns us: "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly." (Eccl. 9:10) And he gives the reason: "For neither work nor reason nor wisdom nor knowledge shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening." In the next life there is neither time for labor, nor possibility of merit, nor wisdom to act correctly, nor skill and experience to judge wisely. After death, what is done is done.

A nun of the monastery Torre dei Specchi in Rome, Sister Bonaventure by name, led a very indifferent life. There came a certain Father Lancisius to preach a retreat to the nuns. Sister Bonaventure, having no wish whatever to rise from her lukewarmness, began with bad grace to listen to the sermons which she was forced to attend. But in the very first sermon divine grace conquered. She went straightway to kneel before the priest and resolutely declared: "Father, I have made up my mind to become a saint, and to do it at once." And with the help of God she did. She lived only about eight months longer, but she lived and died a saint.

David wrote: "And I said, now I have begun." (Ps. 76:2) St. Charles of Borreomeo constantly repeated the same: "Today I begin to serve God in earnest." And so we too must work each day as though until now we had done no good at all. For since in fact all that we succeed in

doing for God is nothing, because it is only our simple duty, we should resolve each day to live for God alone. Nor should we care what others do or how they do it.

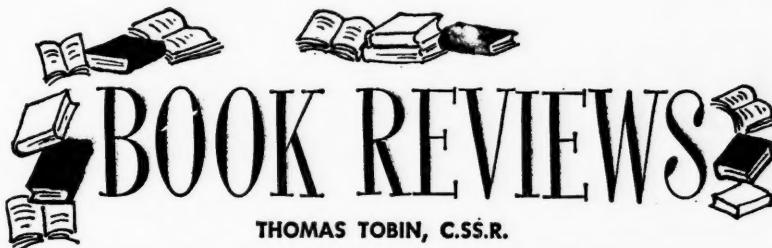
Saints are rare. St. Bernard says: "Nobody can be holy without being singular." If we imitate the common run of men, we shall be full of faults as most of them are. Conquer all, renounce all, to gain all.

St. Theresa says: "Because we do not give God all our affections, neither does God give us all His love." Our all is so little to give for Jesus Christ, Who has given His blood and His life for us. The saint adds: "All that we could possibly do is nothing but a handful of dirt compared with one drop of the blood He has shed for us."

The saints know no miserliness when there is question of pleasing God Who has given us all without reserve, precisely to oblige us to deny Him nothing. St. Chrysostom writes: "He gave everything to you; He kept nothing for Himself." God gave you Himself, totally, entirely; and will you go haggling about how much you will give Him? "Christ died for all, that they also who live may not now live to themselves, but unto Him Who died for them." (II Corinthians 5:15)

QUIET CORNER

It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop
than in a roomy house with a
quarrelsome woman.



BOOK REVIEWS

THOMAS TOBIN, C.S.S.R.

We recommend that books listed or reviewed in THE LIGUORIAN be purchased at your local bookstore. If you cannot obtain the book in that way, you may write to THE LIGUORIAN for further information.

An American Dialogue

Robert McAfee Brown
Gustave Weigel, S.J.

This is an unusual book. A Protestant theologian and a Catholic theologian start a conversation in which each gives a calm, candid and charitable opinion about the other's religion. It is not a pitched battle, nor a direct exchange of letters, a technique so often used by Arnold Lunn, but a simple statement of how a Catholic looks to a Protestant and how a Protestant looks to a Catholic. Neither will agree in all the details of the picture, but each must accept the fact that this is how it appears to the other. Once each group knows what the other thinks about it, a real conversation can take place. These two distinguished American scholars have rendered a valuable service to a better understanding between the two religious groups. A Jewish scholar, Will Herberg, has contributed the introduction. Highly recommended to our readers.

(Doubleday and Co., \$2.95)

Guide to the Bible

A. Robert, A. Tricot
Edward P. Arbez, S.S.
Martin R. P. McGuire, translators

This is a monumental work prepared under the direction of two professors of Sacred Scripture at the Catholic Institute of Paris. It has been edited and translated by two American scholars at the Catholic University. It is an introduction to the study of the Holy Scripture. Many authors have contributed to the text. The large book of over 800 pages treats all the subjects ordinarily considered in an introduction to the Bible. It is a scholarly work for the serious student and is a welcome addition to the growing Biblical literature.

(Desclee Co., \$8.00)

In All Conscience

Harold C. Gardiner, S.J.

Father Harold C. Gardiner, the literary editor of *America*, is one of the foremost Catholic critics in America. His endorsement of a book carries great weight with many readers. *In All Conscience* is a collection of his best pieces from *America*. Represented are reflections on many Catholic and non-Catholic authors and books as well as evaluations of current trends. The pages of this book present a good survey of the good, the indifferent and the bad in current literature. A very stimulating bedside book.

(Hanover House, \$3.95)

The Kingdom of Heaven in Parables

Franz M. Moscher

David Heimann, translator

This new volume in the *Cross and Crown Series of Spirituality* developed from a series of informal lectures on the parables of Christ. The stories are explained against the background of life at the time of Christ and application is made to modern living. As the title indicates only the parables about the *Kingdom of Heaven* are considered.

(B. Herder, \$4.75)

Arctic Wings

William A. Leising, O.M.I.

Father William Leising is a flying missionary of the North. There he is priest, dentist, provider and friend for the Eskimos. He shares with readers many of his experiences in the north country. Well-written and interesting.

(Doubleday and Co., \$1.00)

Waiting for Christ

Ronald Knox

Ronald Cox

The New Zealand Scripture scholar, Rev. Ronald Cox, C.M., has again used a part of the Knox translation of the Bible as the basis for his commentary. The previous works (*The Gospel Story, It is Paul Who Writes*) dealt with the life of Christ and the letters of St. Paul. *Waiting for Christ* examines the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Several times in the New Testament Christ referred to prophecies about Himself made in the inspired words of the Old Testament. Father Cox has placed Monsignor Knox's translation of these prophecies on the left page and his own explanation on the right page. Again a very readable and instructive book. The Knox-Cox combination is a good one for all readers who wish a readable text and a popular presentation of the truths of the Bible.

(Sheed and Ward, \$3.50)

I Looked for God's Absence: France

Irenaeus Rosier, O.Carm.

The religious condition of France has evoked a great deal of books. In one, France is called pagan; in others she is described as Catholic in basic philosophy or in tradition even though not practicing the faith; in many other works the apostolate of the priest workers is described. Father Irenaeus Rosier is a Holland Carmelite who worked as a layman in the mines for a short period in order to understand the basic attitudes of the worker to the Church. His conclusion is that despite a very low percentage of active practice of the faith there is basically a Christian and not pagan feeling among the workers.

(Sheed and Ward, \$3.95)

Father Baker

Floyd Anderson

In the history of the Catholic Church in America the name of Father Baker awakens in many minds the vast charitable work done at Lackawanna, N. Y., under the protection of Our Lady of Victory. Father Baker spent 60 years in his beloved work of helping orphans and unmarried mothers. Floyd Anderson has written a popular biography of this extraordinary man whose name is remembered by thousands.

(Bruce Publishing Co., \$3.00)

A Book of Private Prayer Dom Hubert Van Zeller, O.S.B.

The English Benedictine master of the spiritual life has added another book to his long list. It is unusual not only because of the high quality of Dom Hubert's works, but because it offers prayers that are different. Here are some of the special prayers: When Depressed, When Lonely, When Unable to Sleep, When Unable to Pray, When Leaving a Place Which We Like, When Arriving at a Place Which We Dislike. A book to have at hand.

(Templegate, \$3.25)

The Holy Spirit and the Art of Living

J. A. O'Driscoll, S.M., D.D.

Too many Christians know little about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Many of those who have heard of the gifts feel that they are reserved for the higher levels of Christian living. The Irish Marist theologian emphasizes the importance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the everyday life of the Christian. He has the facility of explaining in simple language the nature and the functioning of the seven gifts. A very practical and clear presentation.

(B. Herder Co., \$2.35)

Witnesses of the Gospel Henry Panneel

Paul A. Barrett, O.P., translator

A distinguished French author, Henry Panneel, has depicted the life of Christ from a very novel aspect. He sees Christ as those who participated in the various incidents saw Him. Besides the better-known historical figures we meet Ascher, the executioner of John the Baptist; Macassas, the blind man; Malchus, servant of Caiphas; Caius, the centurian; Mardoch, the money-changer; the bridegroom at Cana. This fictionalized portrait of Christ rings true and makes very interesting reading.

(B. Herder Co., \$3.75)

Key to the Missal

Cornelius A. Bouman

Mary Perkins Ryan

Cornelius A. Bouman, a Holland liturgist and Mary Perkins Ryan, an American housewife and author, have collaborated on the **Key to the Missal**. After introductory chapters the text examines the various feasts of the temporal cycle; the feasts of our Lord, our Lady and the saints. Discussion aids make it suitable for study groups.

(Fides, \$2.95)

Liturgy and Personality

Dietrich Von Hildebrand

One of the early books that helped the Liturgical Movement was *Liturgy and Personality* published in German in 1932 by the Catholic philosopher Dietrich Von Hildebrand. An American edition was very favorably received. Since the Liturgical Movement has made much progress in the last 30 years it was thought advisable to bring this book up to date. The emphasis is on the influence of the liturgy in the formation of the human person since it brings the person in such close contact with the divine personality of Christ. A book for those who think as they read.

(Helicon Press, \$3.50)

Journey of Love

Helen Louise Hartmann
Janice Brickey

Two mothers meditated on the stations of the cross and the result is Journey of Love — the journey of Christ accompanied in spirit by the two women. The reflections are deeply personal and practical. All mothers will find many of their own feelings expressed and will learn how to unite their journey of love in marriage with Christ's journey of love to Calvary.

(Bruce Publishing Co., \$3.00)

BEST SELLERS

A Moral Evaluation of Current Books, Published at the University of Scranton, Pa.

MOST POPULAR

(*Not necessarily approved. Roman numeral indicates a moral rating according to categories used in general list.*)

The Leopard (IIa)—*di Lampedusa*
Hawaii (IIb)—*Michener*
Advise and Consent (IIb)—*Drury*
The Chapman Report (IV)—
 Wallace
Water of Life (IV)—*Robinson*
The Lovely Ambition (IIa)—*Chase*
The Affair (IIa)—*Snow*
The View from the Fortieth Floor
 (IIb)—*White*
Watcher in the Shadows (I)—
 Household
To Kill a Mockingbird (IIa)—*Lee*
Trustee from the Tool Room (IIa)
 —*Shute*
The Lincoln Lord (I)—*Hawley*
Before You Go (IIb)—*Weidman*
The Inspector (IIa)—*de Hartog*

I. Suitable for general reading:

The Numbered Account—*Bridge*
The Second Life of Captain Con-
treras—*de Tena*
This Little Band of Prophets—
 Fremantle
The Hurricane Story—*Gallico*
A Good Fight—*Gould*
Burrhead's Confessions—*Hansen*
The Proudest Day—*Muller*
The View from the Ninth Decade—
 Penney
Decision at Trafalgar—*Pope*
You Can Trust the Communists—
 Schwarz
Dead on Arrival—*Thayer*
Glad Tidings—*Warren*
No Compromise!—*Whitridge*
Night—*Wiesel*

Benedictine and Moor—*Beach & Dunphy*
Diving for Pleasure and Treasure—
 Blair
This Demi-Paradise—*Halsey*
Mrs. Fitzherbert—*Leslie*
The Long Rescue—*Powell*
Trout Madness—*Traver*
First Men to the Moon—*von Braun*
Soul of the Lion: A Biography of
 Gen. Joshua J. Chamberlain—
 Wallace
Frederick Delius—*Beecham*
Kith and Kin—*Bentley*
The Healing Power of Poetry—
 Blanton
Don't Forget to Write—*Buchwald*
Surface at the Pole—*Calvert*
Christianity and Communism—
 Chambre
Ghost Ship at the Pole—*Cross*
Eastern Liturgies—*Dalmat*
The Christian Calendar—*Denis- Boulet*
The Rome Escape Line—*Derry*
But Not Forgotten—*Fenison*
The Yankee from Tennessee—
 Gerson
The Hyphenated Family—*Hagedorn*
There's Good News Tonight—
 Heatter
A Pact With Satan—*Holton*
The Case of Sonya Wayward—
 Innes
The Mintor Affair—*Kelland*
Vestments and Church Furniture
 —*Lesage*

II. Suitable only for adults:
A. Because of advanced style and contents:
Let Us Now Praise Famous Men
 —*Agée & Evans*
The Goncourt Brothers—*Billy*

The Origins of Rome—*Bloch*
The Complete Works of Francois Villon—*Bonner*
The Strategy of Desire—*Dichter*
Peter the Great—*Grey*
Closed Circuit—*Haggard*
All Fall Down—*Herlihy*
Blood Red—*Morton*
Murder by Request—*Nichols*
Enter Murderers—*Slesar*
Aground—*Williams*
The Anglo-Saxons—*Wilson*
In This World and Other Stories—*Ziller*
A Net of Gold—*Ekert-Rotholz*
The Liberal Hour—*Galbraith*
Madame Goldenflower—*Lee*
Anna Teller—*Sinclair*
The Burning Eyes—*Canning*
The Bridge—*Gregor*
A Conscience in Conflict—*Gruber*
The Later Middle Ages—*Guillemain*
The Four Loves—*Lewis*
A Silence of Desire—*Markandaya*
Anybody's Spring—*Murray*
Is There a Christian Philosophy?—*Nedoncelle*

B. Because of immoral incidents which do not, however, invalidate the book as a whole:

Where No Flags Fly—*Ayer*
Bar Sinister—*Ballard*
The Gold-Rimmed Spectacles—*Bassani*
Do You Know This Voice?—*Berckman*
The Only Nellie Fayle—*Bloch*
Tonya—*Boystong*
Murder: One, Two, Three—*Creasy*
Dragon's Wine—*Deal*
Dark Lady—*Disney*
Mountain of Villainy—*Engelson*
In a Forest Dark—*Feldman*
Prosper—*Hill*
The Inhabitants—*Horwitz*

Auschwitz—*Nyisli*
The Beat of Life—*Solomon*
Ordeal by Hunger—*Stewart*
Journey Into Crime—*Whitehead*
The Incredible Charlie Carewe—*Astor*
Winter Solstice—*Brace*
The Double View—*Brossard*
The Silver Bacchanal—*Fulop-Miller*
Away From Home—*Jaffe*
Be Not Angry—*Michelfelder*
The Luck of Ginger Coffey—*Moore*
The Proud Walk—*Moore*
By Antietam Creek—*Robertson*
Walk Egypt—*Williams*
The Hero Continues—*Windham*
The Inquisitors—*Andrzejewski*
Evvie—*Caspary*
The Fiercest Heart—*Cloete*
The Silent Hostage—*Gainham*
The Cadaver of Gideon Wyck—*Laing*
Heroic Love—*Loomis*
The Sands of Kalahiri—*Mulvihill*
The Savage Country—*O'Meara*

III. Permissible for the discriminating adult:

The Sot-Weed Factor—*Barth*
Cravings of Desire—*Kahler*
The Clown—*Kern*
Earth Giant—*Marshall*
The Project—*Sinclair*
The Human Season—*Wallant*
His Brother, the Bear—*Ansell*
The Peacock Eye—*Lusardi*
Born—*Schweitzer*
Some Other Time—*Alpert*
Captain Cat—*Holles*

IV. Not recommended to any reader:

Madeleine Austrian—*Kirsch*
The Last Temptation of Christ—*Kazantzakis*
The Seasons of Love—*Dormann*

LUCID INTERVALS

Mrs. Higgins and Mrs. Brown after a quarrel were making up at the ladies' bar.

"Well, Maggie," said Mrs. Brown, "I bears yer no malice." She raised her glass. "So 'ere's lookin' at yer, and 'eaven knows that's a heffort."



Life sure gets complicated. Before, you had to know only the make, model and year of your car. Now you've got to know its nationality.

"Can you send a full length mirror up to my room?" asked the hotel guest.

"But you have a half length mirror up there already," replied the hotel clerk.

"Well, I know it. I've been out twice already without my trousers."

Tramp: "What is the charge against me?"

Judge: "You were brought here for drinking."

Tramp: "That's fine. Let's get started."

"Did you go to another doctor before you came to see me?" said the grumpy M.D.

"No," was the reply, "but I went to a druggist."

"That shows how much sense some people have," growled the doctor. "And what idiotic advice did he give you?"

"Well," said the patient, "he told me to consult you."

The crystal-gazer who collected twenty-five dollars for a reading informed her visitor, "My fee entitles you to ask me two questions."

"Isn't that a lot of money for only two questions?" the startled sitter queried.

"Yes, madam, it is," answered the fortuneteller gravely. "And now, what is your second question?"

FILE 13

Just about the time a woman thinks her work is done she becomes a grandmother. *Irish Digest*

No wonder women live longer than men. Look how long they are girls.

People generally quarrel because they can't argue.

Lesson from a whale: When he spouts off he gets harpooned.

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Christmas Greetings!

THE wishes and prayers of all the priest-editors of the LIGUORIAN go out with this issue to all our readers, including the many new readers who will receive their first copy as a Christmas gift, that they may all enjoy a truly blessed and happy Christmas.

This Christmas issue will be followed by the regular monthly issues of 1961, each one dedicated to explaining, clarifying, detailing and exemplifying more of the specific, practical teachings of Christ and of His Church. To new readers, and for the reassurance of older readers, we restate our policy in publishing the LIGUORIAN. We accept no paid advertising for the pages of our publication; we publish no begging appeals; we promote no "causes." We ask only for the attention of our readers to the presentation and explanation of the truths and convictions offered in the LIGUORIAN.

This does not mean that we do not expect our readers on occasion to disagree with some of our views or opinions or statements. By no means! We ask for attention, not for complete agreement with every stand we take. In some things, of course, we shall be expressing revealed or defined Catholic doctrine, or universal moral laws, or serious commands of the Catholic Church. In these cases the disagreement of a reader would not be merely with us but with Christ

Himself, or what amounts to the same thing, with His Church. Thus, for example, when we state that birth-prevention is never lawful, or that Catholics are bound, if they can do so, to send their children to Catholic schools, we are not expressing *our opinions* but precepts or laws binding on all. Our purpose will be to make it easier for all to understand why such laws are universally binding; but no doubt there will be those who will refuse submission to the will of Christ and even write to us in violent defense of their rebellion. We publish such letters only in order to make the truth more clear by contrast.

IN other matters we shall not be expressing firmly established and universally binding laws or precepts or principles, but our own opinions and convictions concerning the application of principles to individual cases or current modern problems. In many of these matters there will be room for difference of opinion amongst our readers. What we ask is that *all readers read the reasons for our opinions in disputed or controverted matters, and not just cancel their subscription in a huff because we hold an opinion contrary to theirs.*

All of us can learn by looking at all sides of questions, not by doggedly refusing to look at any other opinion than our own.

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